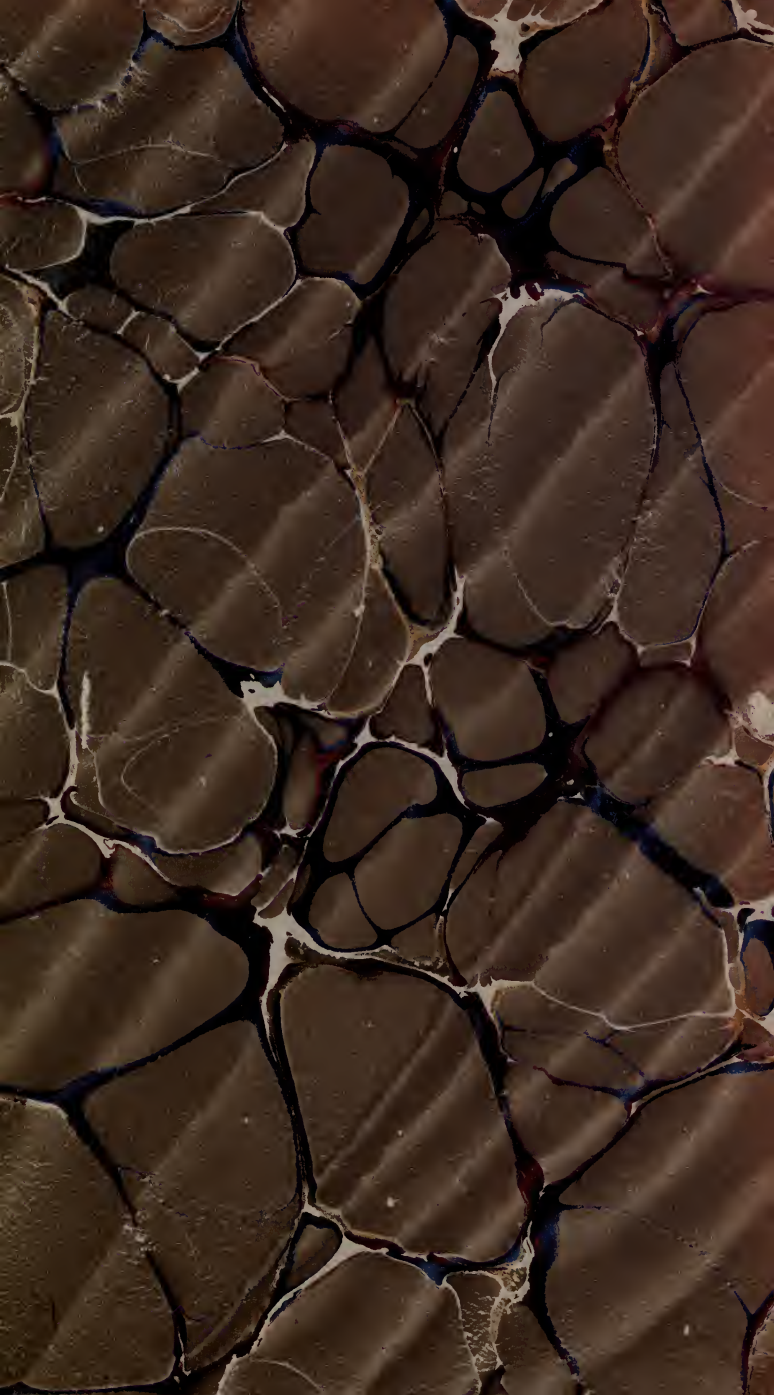




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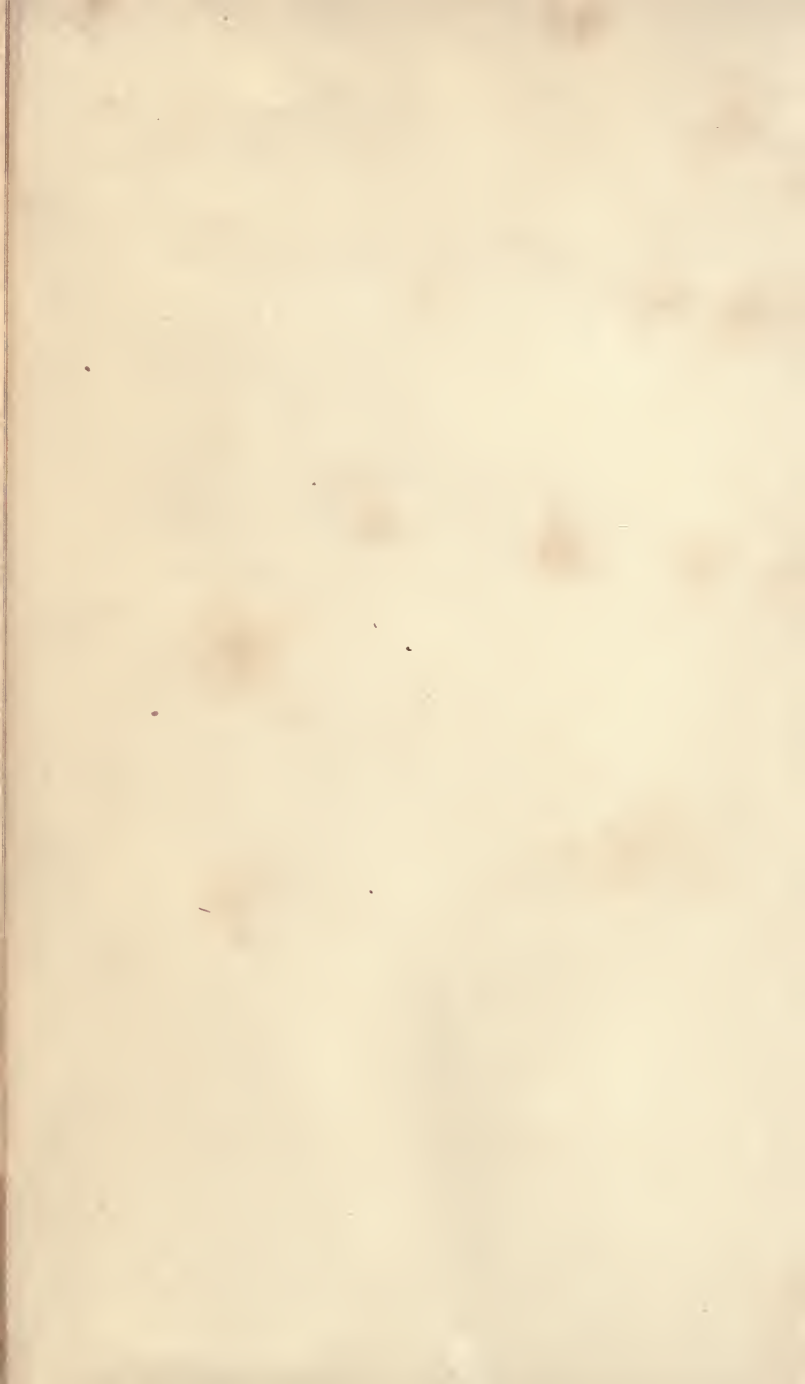
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THE PATHFINDER;

OR,

THE INLAND SEA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE PIONEERS," "THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS,"
"THE PRAIRIE," ETC.

Here the heart
May give a useful lesson to the head,
And Learning wiser grow without his books.

COWPER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE PATHFINDER.

CHAPTER I.

Wandering, I found on my ruinous walk,
By the dial stone, aged and green,
One rose of the wilderness, left on its stalk,
To mark where a garden had been.

CAMPBELL.

It was not only broad daylight when Mabel awoke, but the sun had actually been up some time. Her sleep had been tranquil, for she rested on an approving conscience, and fatigue contributed to render it sweet ; and no sound of those who had been so early in motion had interfered with her rest. Springing to her feet, and rapidly dressing herself, the girl was soon breathing the fragrance of the morning, in the open air. For the first time, she was sensibly

struck with the singular beauties, as well as with the profound retirement, of her present situation. The day proved to be one of those of the autumnal glory, so common to a climate that is more abused than appreciated, and its influence was every way inspiring and genial. Mabel was benefited by this circumstance; for, as she fancied, her heart was heavy on account of the dangers to which a father, whom she now began to love as women love when confidence is created, was exposed.

But the island seemed absolutely deserted. The previous night, the bustle of the arrival had given the spot an appearance of life that was now entirely gone; and our heroine had turned her eyes nearly around on every object in sight, before she caught a view of a single human being to remove the sense of utter solitude. Then, indeed, she beheld all who were left behind, collected in a group, around a fire which might be said to belong to the camp. The person of her uncle, to whom she was so much accustomed, re-assured the girl; and she examined the remainder with a curiosity natu-

ral to her situation. Besides Cap and the Quarter-Master, there were the corporal, the three soldiers, and the woman who was cooking. The huts were silent and empty; and the low but tower-like summit of the blockhouse rose above the bushes, by which it was half-concealed, in picturesque beauty. The sun was just casting its brightness into the open places of the glade, and the vault over her head was impending in the soft sublimity of the blue void. Not a cloud was visible, and she secretly fancied the circumstance might be taken as a harbinger of peace and security.

Perceiving that all the others were occupied with that great concern of human nature—a breakfast, Mabel walked, unobserved, towards an end of the island where she was completely shut out of view by the trees and bushes. Here she got a stand on the very edge of the water, by forcing aside the low branches, and stood watching the barely perceptible flow and re-flow of the miniature waves that laved the shore; a sort of physical echo to the agitation that prevailed on the lake fifty miles above her.

The glimpses of natural scenery that offered were very soft and pleasing; and our heroine, who had a quick and true eye for all that was lovely in nature, was not slow in selecting the most striking bits of landscape. She gazed through the different vistas, formed by the openings between the islands, and thought she had never looked on aught more lovely.

While thus occupied, Mabel was suddenly alarmed by fancying that she caught a glimpse of a human form among the bushes that lined the shore of the island that lay directly before her. The distance across the water was not a hundred yards; and, though she might be mistaken, and her fancy was wandering when the form passed before her sight, still she did not think she could be deceived. Aware that her sex would be no protection against a rifle-bullet, should an Iroquois get a view of her, the girl instinctively drew back, taking care to conceal her person as much as possible by the leaves, while she kept her own look riveted on the opposite shore, vainly waiting for some time, in the expectation of the stranger. She

was about to quit her post in the bushes, and hasten to her uncle, in order to acquaint him of her suspicions, when she saw the branch of an alder thrust beyond the fringe of bushes on the other island, and waved toward her significantly, and as she fancied in token of amity. This was a breathless and a trying moment to one as inexperienced in frontier warfare as our heroine; and yet she felt the great necessity that existed for preserving her recollection, and of acting with steadiness and discretion.

It was one of the peculiarities of the exposure to which those who dwelt on the frontiers of America were liable, to bring out the moral qualities of the women to a degree that they must themselves, under other circumstances, have believed they were incapable of manifesting; and Mabel well knew that the borderers loved to dwell in their legends on the presence of mind, fortitude, and spirit that their wives and sisters had displayed under circumstances the most trying. Her emulation had been awakened by what she had heard on such subjects; and it at once struck her that now was

the moment for her to show that she was truly Sergeant Dunham's child. The motion of the branch was such as she believed indicated amity; and, after a moment's hesitation, she broke off a twig, fastened it to a stick, and, thrusting it through an opening, waved it in return, imitating as closely as possible the manner of the other.

This dumb show lasted two or three minutes on both sides, when Mabel perceived that the bushes opposite were cautiously pushed aside, and a human face appeared at an opening. A glance sufficed to let Mabel see that it was the countenance of a red-skin, as well as that of a woman. A second and a better look, satisfied her that it was the face of the Dew-of-June, the wife of Arrowhead. During the time she had travelled in company with this woman, Mabel had been won by the gentleness of manner, the meek simplicity, and the mingled awe and affection with which she regarded her husband. Once or twice, in the course of the journey, she fancied the Tuscarora had manifested towards herself an un-

pleasant degree of attention; and, on those occasions, it had struck her, that his wife exhibited sorrow and mortification. As Mabel, however, had more than compensated for any pain she might, in this way, unintentionally have caused her companion, by her own kindness of manner and attentions, the woman had shown much attachment to her, and they had parted, with a deep conviction on the mind of our heroine, that in the Dew-of-June she had lost a friend.

It is useless to attempt to analyse all the ways by which the human heart is led into confidence. Such a feeling, however, had the young Tuscarora woman awakened in the breast of our heroine; and the latter, under the impression that this extraordinary visit was intended for her own good, felt every disposition to have a closer communication. She no longer hesitated about showing herself clear of the bushes, and was not sorry to see the Dew-of-June imitate her confidence, by stepping fearlessly out of her own cover. The two girls, for the Tuscorora, though married,

was even younger than Mabel, now openly exchanged signs of friendship, and the latter beckoned to her friend to approach, though she knew not the manner, herself, in which this object could be effected. But the Dew-of-June was not slow in letting it be seen that it was in her power; for, disappearing a moment, she soon showed herself again in the end of a bark canoe, the bows of which she had drawn to the edge of the bushes, and of which the body still lay in a sort of covered creek. Mabel was about to invite her to cross, when her own name was called aloud, in the stentorian voice of her uncle. Making a hurried gesture for the Tuscarora girl to conceal herself, Mabel sprang from the bushes, and tripped up the glade towards the sound, and perceived that the whole party had just seated themselves at breakfast; Cap having barely put his appetite under sufficient restraint to summon her to join them. That this was the most favourable instant for the interview flashed on the mind of Mabel; and excusing herself on the plea of not being prepared for the meal,

she bounded back to the thicket, and soon renewed her communications with the young Indian woman.

Dew-of-June was quick of comprehension ; and with half-a-dozen noiseless strokes of the paddles, her canoe was concealed in the bushes of Station Island. In another minute, Mabel held her hand, and was leading her through the grove towards her own hut. Fortunately, the latter was so placed as to be completely hid from the sight of those at the fire, and they both entered it unseen. Hastily explaining to her guest, in the best manner she could, the necessity of quitting her for a short time, Mabel, first placing the Dew-of-June in her own room, with a full certainty that she would not quit it until told to do so, went to the fire, and took her seat among the rest, with all the composure it was in her power to command.

“Late come, late served, Mabel,” said her uncle, between two mouthfuls of broiled salmon ; for though the cookery might be very unsophisticated on that remote frontier, the viands were generally delicious ; “late come,

late served ; it is a good rule, and keeps laggards up to their work."

" I am no laggard, uncle ; for I have been stirring nearly an hour, and exploring our island."

" It's little you'll make o' that, Mistress Mabel," put in Muir, " that's little by nature. Lundie, or it might be better to style him Major Duncan in this presence"—this was said in consideration of the corporal and the common men, though they were taking their meal a little apart—" it might be better to style him Major Duncan in this presence, has not added an empire to his Majesty's dominions in getting possession of this island, which is likely to equal that of the celebrated Sancho, in revenues and profits—Sancho of whom, doubtless, Master Cap, you'll often have been reading in your leisure hours, more especially in calms, and moments of inactivity."

" I know the spot you mean, Quarter-Master ; Sancho's Island—coral rock, of new formation, and as bad a landfall, in a dark night and blowing weather, as a sinner could

wish to keep clear of. It's a famous place for cocoa-nuts and bitter water, that Sancho's Island."

"It's no very famous for dinners," returned Muir, repressing the smile that was struggling to his lips, out of respect to Mabel, "nor do I think there'll be much to choose between its revenue and that of this spot. In my judgment, Master Cap, this is a very un-military position, and I look to some calamity befalling it, sooner or later."

"It is to be hoped not until our turn of duty is over," observed Mabel. "I have no wish to study the French language."

"We might think ourselves happy, did it not prove to be the Iroquois. I have reasoned with Major Duncan on the occupation of this position, but 'a wilfu' man maun ha' his way.' My first object, in accompanying this party, was to endeavour to make myself acceptable and useful to your beautiful niece, Master Cap; and the second was to take such an account of the stores that belong to my particular department, as shall leave no ques-

tion open to controversy, concerning the manner of expenditure, when they shall have disappeared by means of the enemy."

"Do you look upon matters as so serious?" demanded Cap, actually suspending his mastication of a bit of venison, for he passed alternately, like a modern *élégant*, from fish to flesh and back again, in the interest he took in the answer. "Is the danger pressing?"

"I'll no say just that; and I'll no say just the contrary. There is always danger in war, and there is more of it at the advanced posts than at the main encampment. It ought, therefore, to occasion no surprise were we to be visited by the French at any moment."

"And what the devil is to be done in that case? Six men and two women would make but a poor job, in defending such a place as this, should the enemy invade us; as no doubt, Frenchman-like, they would take very good care to come strong-handed."

"That we may depend on—some very formidable force, at the very lowest. A military disposition might be made in defence of the

island, out of all question, and according to the art of war, though we would probably fail in the force necessary to carry out the design, in any very creditable manner. In the first place, a detachment should be sent off to the shore, with orders to annoy the enemy in landing; a strong party ought instantly to be thrown into the blockhouse, as the citadel, for on that all the different detachments would naturally fall back for support, as the French advanced; and an entrenched camp might be laid out around the stronghold, as it would be very unmilitary indeed, to let the foe get near enough to the foot of the walls to mine them. Chevaux-de-frise would keep the cavalry in check; and as for the artillery, redoubts should be thrown up under cover of yon woods. Strong skirmishing parties, moreover, would be exceedingly serviceable in retarding the march of the enemy; and these different huts, if properly piqueted and ditched, would be converted into very eligible positions for that object."

“ Whe-e-e-w ! Quarter-Master. And who the d—l is to find all the men to carry out such a plan ? ”

“ The King, out of all question, Master Cap. It is his quarrel, and it ’s just he should bear the burthen o’ it.”

“ And we are only six ! This is fine talking, with a vengeance. You could be sent down to the shore to oppose the landing, Mabel might skirmish with her tongue at least, the soldier’s wife might act *chevaux-de-frise*, to entangle the cavalry, the corporal should command the entrenched camp, his three men could occupy the five huts, and I would take the blockhouse. Whe-e-e-w ! you describe well, Lieutenant ; and should have been a limner instead of a soldier.”

“ Na, I ’ve been very literal and upright in my exposition of matters. That there is no greater force here to carry out the plan, is a fault of His Majesty’s ministers, and none of mine.”

“ But should our enemy really appear,” asked Mabel, with more interest than she might

have shown, had she not remembered the guest in the hut, "what course ought we to pursue?"

"My advice would be to attempt to achieve that, pretty Mabel, which rendered Xenophon so justly celebrated."

"I think you mean a retreat, though I half guess at your allusion."

"You've imagined my meaning from the possession of a strong native sense, young lady. I am aware that your worthy father has pointed out to the corporal certain modes and methods by which he fancies this island could be held, in case the French should discover its position; but the excellent Sergeant, though your father, and as good a man in his duties as ever wielded a spontoon, is not the great Lord Stair, or even the Duke of Marlborough. I'll not deny the Sergeant's merits, in his particular sphere, though I cannot exaggerate qualities, however excellent, into those of men who may be, in some trifling degree, his superiors. Sergeant Dunham has taken counsel of his heart, instead of his head, in resolving to issue such

orders; but, if the fort fall, the blame will lie on him that ordered it to be occupied, and not on him whose duty it was to defend it. Whatever may be the determination of the latter, should the French and their allies land, a good commander never neglects the preparations necessary to effect a retreat; and I would advise Master Cap, who is the admiral of our navy, to have a boat in readiness to evacuate the island, if need comes to need. The largest boat that we have left carries a very ample sail; and by hauling it round here, and mooring it under those bushes, there will be a convenient place for a hurried embarkation; and then you'll perceive, pretty Mabel, that it is scarcely fifty yards before we shall be in a channel between two other islands, and hid from the sight of those who may happen to be on this."

"All that you say is very true, Mr. Muir; but may not the French come from that quarter themselves? If it is so good for a retreat, it is equally good for an advance."

"They'll no have the sense to do so discreet

a thing," returned Muir, looking furtively and a little uneasily around him; "they'll no have sufficient discretion. Your French are a head-over-heels nation, and usually come forward in a random way; so we may look for them, if they come at all, on the other side of the island."

The discourse now became exceedingly desultory, touching principally, however, on the probabilities of an invasion, and the best means of meeting it.

To most of this Mabel paid but little attention; though she felt some surprise that Lieutenant Muir, an officer whose character for courage stood well, should openly recommend an abandonment of what appeared to her to be doubly a duty, her father's character being connected with the defence of the island. Her mind, however, was so much occupied with her guest, that, seizing the first favourable moment, she left the table, and was soon in her own hut again. Carefully fastening the door, and seeing that the simple curtain was drawn before the single little window, Mabel next led

the Dew-of-June, or June, as she was familiarly termed by those who spoke to her in English, into the outer room, making signs of affection and confidence.

“I am glad to see you, June,” said Mabel, with one of her sweetest smiles, and in her own winning voice; “very glad to see you: what has brought you hither, and how did you discover the island?”

“Speak slow,” said June, returning smile for smile, and pressing the little hand she held with one of her own, that was scarcely larger, though it had been hardened by labour; “more slow—too quick.”

Mabel repeated her questions, endeavouring to repress the impetuosity of her feelings; and she succeeded in speaking so distinctly as to be understood.

“June, friend,” returned the Indian woman.

“I believe you, June—from my soul I believe you; what has this to do with your visit?”

“Friend come to see friend,” answered June, again smiling openly in the other’s face.

“ There is some other reason, June : else would you never run this risk, and alone. You are alone, June ? ”

“ June wid you, no one else. June come alone, paddle canoe.”

“ I hope so, I think so — nay, I *know* so. You would not be treacherous with me, June ? ”

“ What treacherous ? ”

“ You would not betray me, would not give me to the French, to the Iroquois, to Arrow-head ? ” — June shook her head earnestly — “ you would not sell my scalp ? ”

Here June passed her arm fondly around the slender waist of Mabel, and pressed her to her heart with a tenderness and affection that brought tears into the eyes of our heroine. It was done in the fond caressing manner of a woman, and it was scarcely possible that it should not obtain credit for sincerity with a young and ingenuous person of the same sex. Mabel returned the pressure, and then held the other off at the length of her arm, looked her steadily in the face, and continued her inquiries.

“ If June has something to tell her friend,

let her speak plainly," she said. "My ears are open."

"June 'fraid Arrowhead kill her."

"But Arrowhead will never know it." Mabel's blood mounted to her temples as she said this; for she felt that she was urging a wife to be treacherous to her husband. "That is, Mabel will not tell him."

"He bury tomahawk in June's head."

"That must never be, dear June; I would rather you should say no more, than run this risk."

"Blockhouse good place to sleep, good place to stay."

"Do you mean that I may save my life by keeping in the blockhouse, June? Surely, surely, Arrowhead will not hurt you for telling me that. He cannot wish me any great harm, for I never injured him."

"Arrowhead wish no harm to handsome pale-face," returned June, averting her face; and, though she always spoke in the soft gentle voice of an Indian girl, now permitting its notes to fall so low as to cause them to sound

melancholy and timid, "Arrowhead love pale-face girl."

Mabel blushed, she knew not why, and for a moment her questions were repressed by a feeling of inherent delicacy. But it was necessary to know more; for her apprehensions had been keenly awakened, and she resumed her inquiries.

"Arrowhead can have no reason to love or to hate *me*," she said. "Is he near you?"

"Husband always near wife, here," said June, laying her hand on her heart.

"Excellent creature! But tell me, June, ought I to keep in the blockhouse to-day—this morning—now?"

"Blockhouse very good; good for women. Blockhouse got no scalp."

"I fear I understand you only too well, June. Do you wish to see my father?"

"No here; gone away."

"You cannot know that, June; you see the island is full of his soldiers."

"No full; gone away:"—here June held up four of her fingers,—“so many red-coats.”

"And Pathfinder? would you not like to

see the Pathfinder? he can talk to you in the Iroquois tongue."

"Tongue gone wid him," said June, laughing; "keep tongue in his mout'."

There was something so sweet and contagious in the infantine laugh of an Indian girl, that Mabel could not refrain from joining in it, much as her fears were aroused by all that had passed.

"You appear to know, or to think you know, all about us, June. But if Pathfinder be gone, Eau-douce can speak French, too. You know Eau-douce; shall I run and bring *him* to talk with you?"

"Eau-douce gone too, all but heart; that there." As June said this, she laughed again; looked in different directions, as if unwilling to confuse the other; and laid her hand on Mabel's bosom.

Our heroine had often heard of the wonderful sagacity of the Indians, and of the surprising manner in which they noted all things, while they appeared to regard none; but she was scarcely prepared for the direction the dis-

course had so singularly taken. Willing to change it, and at the same time truly anxious to learn how great the danger that impended over them might really be, she rose from the camp-stool on which she had been seated ; and, by assuming an attitude of less affectionate confidence, she hoped to hear more of that she really desired to learn, and to avoid allusions to that which she found so embarrassing.

“ You know how much or how little you ought to tell me, June,” she said ; “ and I hope you love me well enough to give me the information I ought to hear. My dear uncle, too, is on the island, and you are, or ought to be, his friend as well as mine ; and both of us will remember your conduct when we get back to Oswego.”

“ May be, never get back ; who know ? ” This was said doubtingly, or as one lays down an uncertain proposition, and not with a taunt, or a desire to alarm.

“ No one knows what will happen but God. Our lives are in his hands. Still, I think you are to be his instrument in saving us.”

This passed June's comprehension, and she only looked her ignorance; for it was evident she wished to be of use.

"Blockhouse very good," she repeated, as soon as her countenance ceased to express uncertainty, laying strong emphasis on the two last words.

"Well, I understand this, June, and will sleep in it to-night. Of course, I am to tell my uncle what you have said?"

The Dew-of-June started, and she discovered a very manifest uneasiness at the interrogatory.

"No, no, no, no!" she answered, with a volubility and vehemence that was imitated from the French of the Canadas, "no good to tell Salt-water. He much talk and long tongue. Thinks woods all water, understand not'ing. Tell Arrowhead, and June die."

"You do my dear uncle injustice, for he would be as little likely to betray you as any one."

"No understand. Salt-water got tongue,

but no eyes, no ears, no nose — not'ing but tongue, tongue, tongue !”

Although Mabel did not exactly coincide in this opinion, she saw that Cap had not the confidence of the young Indian woman, and that it was idle to expect she would consent to his being admitted to their interview.

“ You appear to think you know our situation pretty well, June,” Mabel continued ; “ have you been on the island before this visit ? ”

“ Just come.”

“ How then do you know that what you say is true ? my father, the Pathfinder, and Eau-douce may all be here within sound of my voice, if I choose to call them.”

“ All gone,” said June positively ; smiling good-humouredly at the same time.

“ Nay, this is more than you *can* say certainly, not having been over the island to examine it.”

“ Got good eyes ; see boat with men go away — see ship with Eau-douce.”

“ Then you have been some time watching us. I think, however, you have not counted them that remain.”

June laughed, held up her four fingers again, and then pointed to her two thumbs ; passing a finger over the first, she repeated the words, “ red-coats ;” and touching the last, she added, “ Salt-water,” “ Quarter-master.” All this was being very accurate, and Mabel began to entertain serious doubts of the propriety of her permitting her visiter to depart without her becoming more explicit. Still it was so repugnant to her feelings to abuse the confidence this gentle and affectionate creature had evidently reposed in her, that Mabel had no sooner admitted the thought of summoning her uncle, than she rejected it, as unworthy of herself and unjust to her friend. To aid this good resolution too, there was the certainty that June would reveal nothing, but take refuge in a stubborn silence, if any attempt were made to coerce her.

“ You think then, June,” Mabel continued, as soon as these thoughts had passed through

her mind, "that I had better live in the block-house?"

"Good place for woman. Blockhouse got no scalp. Logs t'ick."

"You speak confidently, June; as if you had been in it, and had measured its walls."

June laughed; and she looked knowing, though she said nothing.

"Does any one but yourself know how to find this island? have any of the Iroquois seen it?"

June looked sad, and she cast her eyes warily about her, as if distrusting a listener.

"Tuscarora, everywhere — Oswego, here, Frontenac, Mohawk — everywhere. If he see June, kill her."

"But we thought that no one knew of this island, and that we had no reason to fear our enemies while on it."

"Much eye, Iroquois."

"Eyes will not always do, June. This spot is hid from ordinary sight, and few of even our own people know how to find it."

"One man can tell; some Yengeese talk French."

Mabel felt a chill at her heart. All the suspicions against Jasper, which she had hitherto disdained entertaining, crowded in a body on her thoughts; and the sensation that they brought was so sickening, that for an instant she imagined she was about to faint. Arousing herself, and remembering her promise to her father, she arose and walked up and down the hut for a minute, fancying that Jasper's delinquencies were nought to her, though her inmost heart yearned with the desire to think him innocent.

"I understand your meaning, June," she then said; "you wish me to know that some one has treacherously told your people where and how to find the island?"

June laughed, for in her eyes artifice in war was oftener a merit than a crime; but she was too true to her tribe herself, to say more than the occasion required. Her object was to save Mabel, and Mabel only; and she saw no sufficient reason for "travelling out of the record," as the lawyers express it, in order to do any thing else.

“Pale-face know now,” she added. “Block-house good for girl, no matter for men and warriors.”

“But it is much matter with me, June; for one of these men is my uncle, whom I love, and the others are my countrymen and friends. I must tell them what has passed.”

“Then June be kill,” returned the young Indian quietly, though she evidently spoke with concern.

“No! they shall not know that you have been here. Still, they must be on their guard, and we can all go into the blockhouse.”

“Arrowhead know, see everything, and June be kill. June come to tell young pale-face friend, not to tell men. Every warrior watch his own scalp. June woman, and tell woman; no tell men.”

Mabel was greatly distressed at this declaration of her wild friend, for it was now evident the young creature understood that her communication was to go no further. She was ignorant how far these people consider the point of honour interested in her keeping the secret;

and, most of all, was she unable to say how far any indiscretion of her own might actually commit June and endanger her life. All these considerations flashed on her mind, and reflection only rendered their influence more painful. June, too, manifestly viewed the matter gravely ; for she began to gather up the different little articles she had dropped, in taking Mabel's hand, and was preparing to depart. To attempt detaining her was out of the question ; and to part from her, after all she had hazarded to serve her, was repugnant to all the just and kind feelings of our heroine's nature.

“ June,” she said eagerly, folding her arms round the gentle, but uneducated being, “ we are friends. From me you have nothing to fear, for no one shall know of your visit. If you could give me some signal just before the danger comes, some sign by which to know when to go into the blockhouse, how to take care of myself.”

June paused, for she had been in earnest in her intention to depart ; and then she said quietly—

“ Bring June pigeon.”

“ A pigeon ! Where shall I find a pigeon to bring you ? ”

“ Next hut ; bring old one, June go to canoe.”

“ I think I understand you, June ; but had I not better lead you back to the bushes, lest you meet some of the men ? ”

“ Go out first ; count men, one, two, t’ree, four, five, six ” — here June held up her fingers, and laughed — “ all out of way — good ; all but one, call him one side. Then sing, and fetch pigeon.”

Mabel smiled at the readiness and ingenuity of the girl, and prepared to execute her requests. At the door, however, she stopped, and looked back entreatingly at the Indian woman.

“ Is there no hope of your telling me more, June ? ” she said.

“ Know all now, blockhouse good, pigeon tell, Arrow-head kill.”

The last words sufficed ; for Mabel could not urge further communications, when her

companion herself told her, that the penalty of her revelations might be death by the hand of her husband. Throwing open the door, she made a sign of adieu to June, and went out of the hut. Mabel resorted to the simple expedient of the young Indian girl, to ascertain the situation of the different individuals on the island. Instead of looking about her with the intention of recognising faces and dresses, she merely counted them; and found that three still remained at the fire, while two had gone to the boat, one of whom was Mr. Muir. The sixth man was her uncle; and he was coolly arranging some fishing tackle, at no great distance from the fire. The woman was just entering her own hut; and this accounted for the whole party. Mabel now, affecting to have dropped something, returned nearly to the hut she had left warbling an air, stooped as if to pick up some object from the ground, and hurried towards the hut June had mentioned. This was a dilapidated structure, and it had been converted, by the soldiers of the last detachment, into a sort of storehouse for their

live stock. Among other things, it contained a few dozen pigeons, which were regaling on a pile of wheat, that had been brought off from one of the farms plundered on the Canada shore. Mabel had not much difficulty in catching one of these pigeons, although they fluttered and flew about the hut, with a noise like that of drums; and concealing it in her dress, she stole back towards her own hut with the prize. It was empty; and, without doing more than cast a glance in at the door, the eager girl hurried down to the shore. She had no difficulty in escaping observation, for the trees and bushes made a complete cover to her person. At the canoe she found June; who took the pigeon, placed it in a basket of her own manufacturing, and repeating the words, "blockhouse good," she glided out of the bushes, and across the narrow passage, as noiselessly as she had come. Mabel waited some time to catch a signal of leave-taking or amity, after her friend had landed; but none was given. The adjacent islands, without exception, were as quiet as if no one had

ever disturbed the sublime repose of nature ; and nowhere could any sign or symptom be discovered, as Mabel then thought, that might denote the proximity of the sort of danger of which June had given notice.

On returning, however, from the shore, Mabel was struck with a little circumstance, that, in an ordinary situation, would have attracted no attention ; but which, now that her suspicions had been aroused, did not pass before her uneasy eye unnoticed. A small piece of red bunting, such as is used in the ensigns of ships, was fluttering at the lower branch of a small tree, fastened in a way to permit it to blow out, or to droop like a vessel's pennant.

Now that Mabel's fears were awakened, June herself could not have manifested greater quickness in analysing facts that she believed might affect the safety of the party. She saw at a glance, that this bit of cloth could be observed from an adjacent island ; that it lay so near the line between her own hut and the canoe, as to leave no doubt that June had passed near it, if not directly under it ; and that it

might be a signal to communicate some important fact connected with the mode of attack, to those who were probably lying in ambush near them. Tearing the little strip of bunting from the tree, Mabel hastened on, scarcely knowing what her duty next required of her. June might be false to her; but her manner, her looks, her affection, and her disposition as Mabel had known it in the journey, forbade the idea. Then came the allusion to Arrowhead's admiration of the pale-face beauties, some dim recollections of the looks of the Tuscarora, and a painful consciousness that few wives could view with kindness one who had estranged a husband's affections. None of these images were distinct and clear, but they rather gleamed over the mind of our heroine than rested in it, and they quickened her pulses, as they did her step, without bringing with them the prompt and clear decisions that usually followed her reflections. She had hurried onwards towards the hut occupied by the soldier's wife, intending to remove at once to the blockhouse, with the woman, though she could

persuade no other to follow, when her impatient walk was interrupted by the voice of Muir.

“Whither so fast, pretty Mabel,” he cried, “and why so given to solitude? the worthy Sergeant will deride my breeding, if he hear that his daughter passes the mornings alone and unattended to, though he well knows that it is my ardent wish to be her slave and companion, from the beginning of the year to its end.”

“Surely, Mr. Muir, you must have some authority here?” Mabel suddenly arrested her steps to say. “One of your rank would be listened to, at least, by a corporal?”

“I don’t know that, I don’t know that,” interrupted Muir, with an impatience and appearance of alarm that might have excited Mabel’s attention at another moment. “Command is command; discipline, discipline; and authority, authority. Your good father would be sore grieved did he find me interfering to sully or carry off the laurels he is about to win; and I cannot command the corporal,

without equally commanding the Sergeant. The wisest way will be for me to remain in the obscurity of a private individual in this enterprise; and it is so that all parties, from Lundie down, understand the transaction."

"This I know, and it may be well, nor would I give my dear father any cause of complaint; but you may influence the corporal to his own good."

"I'll no say that," returned Muir, in his sly Scotch way; "it would be far safer to promise to influence him to his injury. Mankind, pretty Mabel, have their peculiarities; and to influence a fellow-being to his own good is one of the most difficult tasks of human nature, while the opposite is just the easiest. You'll no forget this, my dear; but bear it in mind for your edification and government; but, what is that you're twisting round your slender finger, as you may be said to twist hearts?"

"It is nothing but a bit of cloth — a sort of flag — a trifle that is hardly worth our attention at this grave moment — If" —

"A trifle! It's no so trifling as ye may

imagine, Mistress Mabel," taking the bit of bunting from her, and stretching it at full length with both his arms extended, while his face grew grave, and his eye watchful. "Ye'll no ha' been finding this, Mabel Dunham, in the breakfast?"

Mabel simply acquainted him with the spot where, and the manner in which she had found the bit of cloth. While she was speaking, the eye of the Quarter-Master was not quiet for a moment, glancing from the rag to the face of our heroine, then back again to the rag. That his suspicions were awakened was easy to be seen, nor was he long in letting it be known what direction they had taken.

"We are not in a part of the world where our ensigns and gauds ought to be spread abroad to the wind, Mabel Dunham!" he said, with an ominous shake of the head.

"I thought as much myself, Mr. Muir, and brought away the little flag, lest it might be the means of betraying our presence here, to the enemy, even though nothing is intended by its display. Ought not my

uncle to be made acquainted with the circumstance?"

"I no see the necessity for that, pretty Mabel; for as you justly say it is a circumstance, and circumstances sometimes worry the worthy mariner. But this flag, if flag it can be called, belongs to a seaman's craft. You may perceive that it is made of what is called bunting, and that is a description of cloth used only by vessels for such purposes, *our* colours being of silk, as you may understand, or painted canvass. It's surprisingly like the fly of the Scud's ensign. And now I recollect me, to have observed that a piece had been cut from that very flag."

Mabel felt her heart sink, but she had sufficient self-command not to attempt an answer.

"It must be looked to," Muir continued, "and after all, I think it may be well to hold a short consultation with Master Cap, than whom a more loyal subject does not exist in the British Empire."

"I have thought the warning so serious," Mabel rejoined, "that I am about to remove

to the blockhouse, and to take the woman with me."

"I do not see the prudence of that, Mabel. The blockhouse will be the first spot assailed, should there really be an attack; and it's no well provided for a siege, that must be allowed. If I might advise in so delicate a contingency, I would recommend your taking refuge in the boat which, as you may now perceive, is most favourably placed to retreat by that channel opposite, where all in it would be hid by the islands, in one or two minutes. Water leaves no trail, as Pathfinder well expresses it; and there appears to be so many different passages in that quarter, that escape would be more than probable. I've always been of opinion that Lundie hazarded too much, in occupying a post as far advanced, and as much exposed, as this."

"It's too late to regret it now, Mr. Muir, and we have only to consult our own security."

"And the King's honour, pretty Mabel. Yes, His Majesty's arms, and his glorious

name, are not to be overlooked on any occasion."

"Then I think it might be better if we all turned our eyes towards the place that has been built to maintain them, instead of the boat," said Mabel, smiling; "and so, Mr. Muir, I am for the blockhouse, with a disposition to await there the return of my father and his party. He would be sadly grieved at finding we had fled, when he got back, successful himself, and filled with the confidence of our having been as faithful to our duties as he has been to his own."

"Nay, nay, for Heaven's sake, do not misunderstand me, Mabel," Muir interrupted with some alarm of manner; "I am far from intimating that any but you females ought to take refuge in the boat. The duty of us men is sufficiently plain, no doubt; and my resolution has been formed from the first, to stand or fall by the blockhouse."

"And did you imagine, Mr. Muir, that two females could row that heavy boat, in a way to escape the bark canoe of an Indian?"

“ Ah ! my pretty Mabel, love is seldom logical, and its fears and misgivings are apt to warp the faculties. I only saw your sweet person in possession of the means of safety, and overlooked the want of ability to use them; but you'll not be so cruel, lovely creature, as to impute to me as a fault, my intense anxiety on your own account !”

Mabel had heard enough: her mind was too much occupied with what had passed that morning, and with her fears, to wish to linger longer to listen to love speeches, that, in her most joyous and buoyant moments, she would have found unpleasant. She took a hasty leave of her companion, and was about to trip away towards the hut of the other woman, when Muir arrested the movement, by laying a hand on her arm.

“ One word, Mabel,” he said, “ before you leave me. This little flag may, or it may not, have a particular meaning: if it has, now that we are aware of its being shown, may it not be better to put it back again, while we watch vigilantly for some answer that may betray the

conspiracy; and if it mean nothing, why nothing will follow."

"This may be all right, Mr. Muir, though if the whole is accidental, the flag might be the occasion of the fort's being discovered."

Mabel stayed to utter no more; but she was soon out of sight, running into the hut towards which she had been first proceeding. The Quarter-master remained on the very spot, and in the precise attitude in which she had left him, for quite a minute, first looking at the bounding figure of the girl, and then at the bit of bunting, which he still held before him, in a way to denote indecision. His irresolution lasted but for this minute, however; for he was soon beneath the tree, where he fastened the mimic flag to a branch again, though from his ignorance of the precise spot from which it had been taken by Mabel, he left it fluttering from a part of the oak where it was still more exposed than before to the eyes of any passenger on the river, though less in view from the island itself.

CHAPTER II.

Each one has had his supping mess,
The cheese is put into the press,
The pans and bowls clean scalded all,
Rear'd up against the milk-house wall.

COTTON.

It seemed strange to Mabel Dunham, as she passed along on her way to find her female companion, that others should be so composed, while she herself felt as if the responsibilities of life and death rested on her shoulders. It is true, that distrust of June's motives mingled with her forebodings; but when she came to recall the affectionate and natural manner of the young Indian girl, and all the evidences of good faith and sincerity that she had seen in her conduct during the familiar intercourse of their journey, she rejected the idea with the unwillingness of a generous disposition to be-

lieve ill of others. She saw, however, that she could not put her companions properly on their guard, without letting them into the secret of her conference with June; and she found herself compelled to act cautiously and with a forethought to which she was unaccustomed, more especially in a matter of so much moment.

The soldier's wife was told to transport the necessaries into the blockhouse, and admonished not to be far from it, at any time, during the day. Mabel did not explain her reasons. She merely stated that she had detected some signs in walking about the island, that induced her to apprehend that the enemy had more knowledge of its position, than had been previously believed, and that they two, at least, would do well to be in readiness to seek a refuge at the shortest notice. It was not difficult to arouse the apprehension of this person, who, though a stout-hearted Scotchwoman, was ready enough to listen to any thing that confirmed her dread of Indian cruelties. As soon as Mabel believed that her companion was sufficiently frightened to

make her wary, she threw out some hints, touching the inexpediency of letting the soldiers know the extent of their own fears. This was done with a view to prevent discussions and inquiries that might embarrass our heroine; she determining to render her uncle, the corporal, and his men, more cautious, by adopting a different course. Unfortunately, the British army could not have furnished a worse person, for the particular duty that he was now required to discharge, than Corporal M'Nab, the individual who had been left in command during the absence of Sergeant Dunham. On the one hand, he was resolute, prompt, familiar with all the details of a soldier's life, and used to war; on the other, he was supercilious as regards the provincials, opinionated on every subject connected with the narrow limits of his professional practice, much disposed to fancy the British empire the centre of all that is excellent in the world, and Scotland, the focus of, at least, all moral excellence in that empire. In short, he was an epitome, though on a scale

suitcd to his rank, of those very qualities, which were so peculiar to the servants of the Crown, that were sent into the colonies, as these servants estimated themselves in comparison with the natives of the country; or, in other words, he considered the American as an animal inferior to the parent stock, and viewed all his notions of military service, in particular, as undigested and absurd. Braddock, himself, was not less disposed to take advice from a provincial, than his humble imitator; and he had been known, on more than one occasion, to demur to the directions and orders of two or three commissioned officers of the corps, who happened to be born in America, simply for that reason; taking care, at the same time, with true Scottish wariness, to protect himself from the pains and penalties of positive disobedience. A more impracticable subject, therefore, could not well have offered for the purpose of Mabel, and yet she felt obliged to lose no time in putting her plan in execution.

“ My father has left you a responsible com-

mand, Corporal," she said, as soon as she could catch M'Nab a little apart from the rest of the soldiers; "for should the island fall into the hands of the enemy, not only would we be captured, but the party that is now out, would in all probability become their prisoners also."

"It needs no journey from Scotland to this place, to know the facts needful to be o' that way of thinking," returned M'Nab, drily.

"I do not doubt your understanding it, as well as myself, Mr. M'Nab; but I'm fearful that you veterans, accustomed as you are to dangers and battles, are a little apt to overlook some of the precautions that may be necessary in a situation as peculiar as ours."

"They say Scotland is no conquered country, young woman, but I'm thinking there must be some mistak' in the matter, as we, her children, are so drowsy-headed, and apt to be o'ertaken when we least expect it."

"Nay, my good friend, you mistake my meaning. In the first place, I'm not thinking of Scotland at all, but of this island;

and then I am far from doubting your vigilance when you think it necessary to practise it; but my great fear is that there may be danger to which your courage will make you indifferent."

"My courage, Mistress Dunham, is doubtless of a very poor quality, being nothing but Scottish courage; your father's is Yankee, and were he here among us, we should see different preparations beyond a doubt. Well, times are getting wrang, when foreigners hold commissions and carry halberds in Scottish corps; and I no wonder that battles are lost, and campaigns go wrang end foremost."

Mabel was almost in despair; but the quiet warning of June was still too vividly impressed on her mind, to allow her to yield the matter. She changed her mode of operating, therefore, still clinging to the hope of getting the whole party within the blockhouse, without being compelled to betray the source whence she obtained her notices of the necessity of vigilance.

"I dare say you are right, Corporal M'Nab,"

she observed, "for I 've often heard of the heroes of your country, who have been among the first of the civilized world, if what they tell me of them is true."

"Have you read the History of Scotland, Mistress Dunham?" demanded the corporal, looking up at his pretty companion, for the first time, with something like a smile on his hard repulsive countenance.

"I have read a little of it, corporal, but I 've heard much more. The lady who brought me up had Scottish blood in her veins, and was fond of the subject."

"I 'll warrant ye, the Sergeant no troubled himself to expatiate on the renown of the country where his regiment was raised?"

"My father has other things to think of, and the little I know, was got from the lady I have mentioned."

"She 'll no be forgetting to tall ye o' Wallace?"

"Of him I 've even read a good deal."

"And o' Bruce, and the affair of Bannockburn?"

“Of that too, as well as o’ Culloden-muir.”

The last of these battles was then a recent event, it having actually been fought within the recollection of our heroine, whose notions of it, however, were so confused that she scarcely appreciated the effect her allusion might produce on her companion. She knew it had been a victory, and had often heard the guests of her patroness mention it with triumph; and she fancied their feelings would find a sympathetic chord in those of every British soldier. Unfortunately, M’Nab had fought throughout that luckless day on the side of the Pretender; and a deep scar, that garnished his face, had been left there by the sabre of a German soldier, in the service of the House of Hanover. He fancied that his wound bled afresh, at Mabel’s allusion; and it is certain that the blood rushed to his face in a torrent, as if it would pour out of his skin at the cicatrix.

“Hoot! hoot awa’!” he fairly shouted, “with your Culloden and Sherrif-muir, young woman; ye’ll no be understanding the sub-

ject at all, and will manifest not only wisdom, but modesty, in speaking o' your ain country and its many failings. King George has some loyal subjects in the colonies, na doubt ; but 't will be a lang time bafore he sees or hears any guid of them."

Mabel was surprised at the corporal's heat, for she had not the smallest idea where the shoe pinched ; but she was determined not to give up the point.

"I've always heard that the Scotch had two of the good qualities of soldiers," she said, "courage and circumspection ; and I feel persuaded that Coporal M'Nab will sustain the national renown."

"Ask ye'r own father, Mistress Dunham : he is acquaint' with Coporal M'Nab, and will no be backward to point out his demerits. We have been in battle the'gither, and he is my superior officer, and has a sort o' official right to give the characters of his subordinates."

"My father thinks well of you, M'Nab, or he would not have left you in charge of this island and all it contains, his own daugh-

ter included. Among other things, I well know that he calculates largely on your prudence. He expects the blockhouse, in particular, to be strictly attended to."

"If he wishes to defend the honour of the 55th behind logs, he ought to have remained in command himsel'; for, to speak frankly, it goes against a Scotsman's bluid and opinions, to be beaten out of the field even before he is attacked. We are broad-sword men, and love to stand foot to foot with the foe. This American mode of fighting, that is getting into so much favour, will destroy the reputation of His Majesty's army, if it no destroy its spirit."

"No true soldier despises caution. Even Major Duncan himself, than whom there is none braver, is celebrated for his care of his men."

"Lundie has his weakness, and is fast forgetting the broad-sword and open heaths, in his tree and rifle practice. But, Mistress Dunham, tak' the word of an old soldier, who has seen his fifty-fifth year, when he talls ye, that there is no surer method to encourage your

enemy, than to seem to fear him; and that there is no danger in this Indian warfare, that the fancies and imaginations of your Americans have not augmented and enlarged upon, until they see a savage in every bush. We Scots, come from a naked region, and have no need, and less relish for covers, and so ye'll be seeing, Mistress Dunham—"

The corporal gave a spring into the air, fell forward on his face, and rolled over on his back, the whole passing so suddenly that Mabel had scarcely heard the sharp crack of the rifle that had sent a bullet through his body. Our heroine did not shriek—did not even tremble; for the occurrence was too sudden, too awful, and too unexpected for that exhibition of weakness; on the contrary, she stepped hastily forward, with a natural impulse to aid her companion. There was just enough of life left in M'Nab to betray his entire consciousness of all that had passed. His countenance had the wild look of one who had been overtaken by death by surprise; and Mabel, in her cooler moments, fancied that it showed the tardy repentance of a wilful and obstinate sinner.

“Ye’ll be getting into the blockhouse, as fast as possible ;” M’Nab whispered, as Mabel leaned over him to catch his dying words.

Then came over our heroine the full consciousness of her situation and of the necessity of exertion. She cast a rapid glance at the body at her feet, saw that it had ceased to breathe, and fled. It was but a few minutes’ run to the blockhouse, the door of which Mabel had barely gained when it was closed violently in her face by Jennie, the soldier’s wife, who in blind terror thought only of her own safety. The reports of five or six rifles were heard while Mabel was calling out for admittance ; and the additional terror they produced prevented the woman within from undoing quickly the very fastenings she had been so expert in applying. After a minute’s delay, however, Mabel found the door reluctantly yielding to her constant pressure, and she forced her slender body through the opening the instant it was large enough to allow of its passage. By this time Mabel’s heart ceased to beat tumultuously, and she gained sufficient

self-command to act collectedly. Instead of yielding to the almost convulsive efforts of her companion to close the door again, she held it open long enough to ascertain that none of her own party was in sight, or likely on the instant to endeavour to gain admission: then she allowed the opening to be shut. Her orders and proceedings now became more calm and rational. But a single bar was crossed, and Jennie was directed to stand in readiness to remove even that at any application from a friend. She then ascended the ladder to the room above, where, by means of a loop-hole, she was enabled to get as good a view of the island as the surrounding bushes would allow. Admonishing her associate below to be firm and steady, she made as careful an examination of the environs as her situation permitted.

To her great surprise, Mabel could not at first see a living soul on the island, friend or enemy. Neither Frenchman nor Indian was visible, though a small straggling white cloud, that was floating before the wind, told her in which quarter she ought to look for them.

The rifles had been discharged from the direction of the island whence June had come, though whether the enemy were on that island, or had actually landed on her own, Mabel could not say. Going to the loop that commanded a view of the spot where M'Nab lay, her blood curdled at perceiving all three of his soldiers lying apparently lifeless at his side. These men had rushed to a common centre at the first alarm, and had been shot down almost simultaneously by the invisible foe whom the corporal had affected to despise.

Neither Cap nor Lieutenant Muir was to be seen. With a beating heart, Mabel examined every opening through the trees, and ascended even to the upper story, or garret, of the block-house, where she got a full view of the whole island, so far as its covers would allow, but with no better success. She had expected to see the body of her uncle lying on the grass, like those of the soldiers, but it was nowhere visible. Turning towards the spot where the boat lay, Mabel saw that it was still fastened to the shore; and then she supposed

that by some accident Muir had been prevented from effecting his retreat in that quarter. In short, the island lay in the quiet of the grave, the bodies of the soldiers rendering the scene as fearful as it was extraordinary.

“For God’s holy sake, Mistress Mabel,” called out the woman from below: for though her fear had got to be too ungovernable to allow her to keep silence, our heroine’s superior refinement, more than the regimental station of her father, still controlled her mode of address — “for His holy sake! Mistress Mabel, tell me if any of our friends are living? I think I hear groans that grow fainter and fainter, and fear that they will all be tomahawked!”

Mabel now remembered that one of the soldiers was this woman’s husband, and she trembled at what might be the immediate effect of her sorrow, should his death become suddenly known to her. The groans too gave a little hope, though she feared they might come from her uncle, who lay out of view.

“We are in his holy keeping, Jennie,” she answered. “We must trust in Providence,

while we neglect none of its benevolent means of protecting ourselves. Be careful with the door; on no account open it, without my directions."

"Oh! tell me, Mistress Mabel, if you can anywhere see Sandy? If I could only let him know that I'm in safety, the guid man would be easier in his mind, whether free or a prisoner."

Sandy was Jennie's husband, and he lay dead in plain view of the loop from which our heroine was then looking.

"You no tell me if you're seeing of Sandy," the woman repeated from below, impatient at Mabel's silence.

"There are some of our people gathered about the body of M'Nab," was the answer; for it seemed sacrilegious in her eyes to tell a direct untruth under the awful circumstances in which she was placed.

"Is Sandy amang them?" demanded the woman, in a voice that sounded appalling by its hoarseness and energy.

"He may be certainly; for I see one, two,

three, four, and all in the scarlet coats of the regiment."

"Sandy!" called out the woman frantically, "why d'ye no care for yoursal', Sandy? Come hither the instant, man, and share your wife's fortunes, in weal or woe. It's no a moment for your silly discipline and vain-glorious notions of honour! Sandy! Sandy!"

Mabel heard the bar turn, and then the door creaked on its hinges. Expectation, not to say terror, held her in suspense at the loop, and she soon beheld Jennie rushing through the bushes in the direction of the cluster of the dead. It took the woman but an instant to reach the fatal spot. So sudden and unexpected had been the blow, that she, in her terror, did not appear to comprehend its weight. Some wild and half-frantic notion of a deception troubled her fancy, and she imagined that the men were trifling with her fears. She took her husband's hand, and it was still warm, while she thought a covert smile was struggling on his lip.

"Why will ye fool life away, Sandy?" she

cried, pulling at the arm. "Ye'll all be murdered by these accursed Indians, and you no takin' to the block like trusty soldiers! Awa'! awa'! and no be losing the precious moments."

In her desperate efforts, the woman pulled the body of her husband in a way to cause the head to turn completely over, when the small hole in the temple, caused by the entrance of a rifle bullet, and a few drops of blood trickling over the skin, revealed the meaning of her husband's silence. As the horrid truth flashed in its full extent on her mind, the woman clasped her hands, gave a shriek that pierced the glades of every island near, and fell at length on the dead body of the soldier. Thrilling, heart-reaching, appalling as was that shriek, it was melody to the cry that followed it so quickly as to blend the sounds. The terrific war-whoop arose out of the covers of the island, and some twenty savages, horrible in their paint, and the other devices of Indian ingenuity, rushed forward, eager to secure the coveted scalps. Arrowhead was foremost, and it was his tomahawk that brained the insen-

sible Jennie; and her reeking hair was hanging at his girdle as a trophy in less than two minutes after she had quitted the blockhouse. His companions were equally active, and M'Nab and his soldiers no longer presented the quiet aspect of men who slumbered. They were left in their gore, unequivocally butchered corpses.

All this passed in much less time than has been required to relate it, and all this did Mabel witness. She had stood riveted to the spot, gazing on the whole horrible scene, as if enchained by some charm, nor did the idea of self, or of her own danger, once obtrude itself on her thoughts. But no sooner did she perceive the place where the men had fallen covered with savages, exulting in the success of their surprise, than it occurred to her that Jennie had left the blockhouse door unbarred. Her heart beat violently, for that defence alone stood between her and immediate death, and she sprang toward the ladder with the intention of descending to make sure of it. Her foot had not yet reached the floor of the second

story, however, when she heard the door grating on its hinges, and she gave herself up for lost. Sinking on her knees, the terrified but courageous girl endeavoured to prepare herself for death, and to raise her thoughts to God. The instinct of life, however, was too strong for prayer, and while her lips moved, the jealous senses watched every sound beneath. When her ears heard the bars, which went on pivots, secured to the centre of the door, turning into their fastenings, not one, as she herself had directed, with a view to admit her uncle, should he apply, but all three, she started again to her feet, all spiritual contemplations vanishing in her actual temporal condition, and it seemed as if all her faculties were absorbed in the sense of hearing.

The thoughts are active in a moment so fearful. At first Mabel fancied that her uncle had entered the blockhouse, and she was about to descend the ladder and throw herself into his arms; then the idea that it might be an Indian, who had barred the door to shut out in-

truders while he plundered at leisure, arrested the movement. The profound stillness below was unlike the bold restless movements of Cap, and it seemed to savour more of the artifices of an enemy: if a friend at all, it could only be her uncle, or the Quarter-master; for the horrible conviction now presented itself to our heroine, that to these two and herself were the whole party suddenly reduced, if, indeed, the two latter survived. This consideration held Mabel in check, and for quite two minutes more a breathless silence reigned in the building. During this time the girl stood at the foot of the upper ladder, the trap which led to the lower opening on the opposite side of the floor; the eyes of Mabel were riveted on this spot, for she now began to expect to see, at each instant, the horrible sight of a savage face at the hole. This apprehension soon became so intense, that she looked about her for a place of concealment. The procrastination of the catastrophe she now fully expected, though it were only for a moment, afforded a relief. The room contained seve-

ral barrels; and behind two of these Mabel crouched, placing her eyes at an opening by which she could still watch the trap. She made another effort to pray; but the moment was too horrible for that relief. She thought, too, that she heard a low rustling, as if one were ascending the lower ladder, with an effort at caution so great, as to betray itself by its own excess; then followed a creaking, that she was certain came from one of the steps of the ladder, which had made the same noise under her own light weight as she ascended. This was one of those instants into which are compressed the sensations of years of ordinary existence. Life, death, eternity, and extreme bodily pain, were all standing out in bold relief from the plane of every-day occurrences; and she might have been taken, at that moment, for a beautiful palid representation of herself, equally without motion and without vitality. But, while such was the outward appearance of the form, never had there been a time in her brief career, when Mabel heard more acutely, saw more clearly, or felt more vividly. As yet, nothing

was visible at the trap; but her ears, rendered exquisitely sensitive by intense feeling, distinctly acquainted her that some one was within a few inches of the opening in the floor. Next followed the evidence of her eyes, which beheld the dark hair of an Indian rising so slowly through the passage, that the movements of the head might be likened to that of the minute-hand of a clock; then came the dark skin and wild features, until the whole of the swarthy face had risen above the floor. The human countenance seldom appears to advantage when partially concealed; and Mabel imagined many additional horrors as she first saw the black roving eyes, and the expression of wildness, as the savage countenance was revealed, as it might be, inch by inch; but, when the entire head was raised above the floor, a second and a better look assured our heroine that she saw the gentle, anxious, and even handsome face of June.

CHAPTER III.

————— Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive ;
But in reward of thy fidelity.

WORDSWORTH.

It would be difficult to say which evinced the most satisfaction, when Mabel sprang to her feet, and appeared in the centre of the room, our heroine, on finding that her visiter was the wife of Arrowhead, and not Arrowhead himself, or June, at discovering that her advice had been followed, and that the block-house contained the person she had so anxiously and almost hopelessly sought. They embraced each other, and the unsophisticated Tuscarora woman laughed in her sweet accents, as she held her friend at arm's-length, and made certain of her presence.

“Blockhouse, good,” said the young Indian; “got no scalp.”

“It is, indeed, good, June,” Mabel answered with a shudder, veiling her eyes at the same time, as if to shut out a view of the horrors she had so lately witnessed. “Tell me, for God’s sake! if you know, what has become of my dear uncle; I have looked in all directions, without being able to see him.”

“No here in blockhouse?” June asked, with some curiosity.

“Indeed he is not: I am quite alone in this place; Jennie, the woman who was with me, having rushed out to join her husband, and perishing for her imprudence.”

“June know, June see; very bad, Arrowhead no feel for any wife; no feel for his own.”

“Ah! June; your life, at least, is safe!”

“Don’t know; Arrowhead kill me, if he know all.”

“God bless and protect you! June; he *will* bless and protect you for this humanity. Tell me what is to be done, and if my poor uncle is still living?”

“Don’t know. Salt-water has boat ; may be he go on river.”

“The boat is still on the shore, but neither my uncle nor the Quarter-master is anywhere to be seen.”

“No kill, or June would see. Hide away ! Red man hide ; no shame for pale-face.”

“It is not the shame that I fear for them, but the opportunity. Your attack was awfully sudden, June ?”

“Tuscarora !” returned the other, smiling with exultation at the dexterity of her husband. “Arrowhead, great warrior !”

“You are too good and gentle for this sort of life, June ; you *cannot* be happy in such scenes ?”

June’s countenance grew clouded, and Mabel fancied there was some of the savage fire of a chief in her frown as she answered,—

“Yengeese too greedy, take away all hunting grounds ; chase Six Nation from morning to night ; wicked king, wicked people. Pale-face very bad.”

Mabel knew, that even in that distant day,

there was much truth in this opinion, though she was too well instructed not to understand that the monarch, in this, as in a thousand other cases, was blamed for acts of which he was most probably ignorant. She felt the justice of the rebuke, therefore, too much to attempt an answer, and her thoughts naturally reverted to her own situation.

“And what am I to do, June?” she demanded. “It cannot be long before your people will assault this building.”

“Blockhouse good—got no scalp.”

“But they will soon discover that it has got no garrison, too, if they do not know it already. You, yourself, told me the number of people that were on the island, and doubtless you learned it from Arrowhead.”

“Arrowhead know,” answered June, holding up six fingers, to indicate the number of the men. “All red men know. Four lose scalp already; two got ’em, yet.”

“Do not speak of it, June; the horrid thought curdles my blood. Your people cannot know that I am alone in the blockhouse,

but may fancy my uncle and the Quartermaster with me, and may set fire to the building, in order to dislodge them. They tell me that fire is the great danger to such places."

"No burn blockhouse," said June, quietly.

"You cannot know that, my good June, and I have no means to keep them off."

"No burn blockhouse. Blockhouse good; got no scalp."

"But tell me why, June; I fear they will burn it."

"Blockhouse wet—much rain—logs green—no burn easy. Red man know it—fine t'ing—then no burn it to tell Yengeese that Iroquois been here. Fader come back, miss blockhouse, no found. No, no; Indian too much cunning; no touch any thing."

"I understand you, June, and hope your prediction may be true; for as regards my dear father, should he escape—perhaps he is already dead, or captured, June?"

"No touch fader—don't know where he gone—water got no trail—red man can't

follow. No burn blockhouse — blockhouse good ; got no scalp.”

“ Do you think it possible for me to remain here safely, until my father returns ? ”

“ Don’t know ; daughter tell best, when fader come back.”

Mabel felt uneasy at the glance of June’s dark eye, as she uttered this ; for the unpleasant surmise arose that her companion was endeavouring to discover a fact that might be useful to her own people, while it would lead to the destruction of her parent and his party. She was about to make an evasive answer, when a heavy push at the outer door suddenly drew all her thoughts to the immediate danger.

“ They come ! ” she exclaimed, — “ perhaps, June, it is my uncle, or the Quarter-Master. I cannot keep out even Mr. Muir at a moment like this.”

“ Why no look ; plenty loop-hole, made purpose.”

Mabel took the hint, and going to one of the downward loops, that had been cut through

the logs in the part that overhung the basement, she cautiously raised the little block that ordinarily filled the small hole, and caught a glance at what was passing at the door. The start and changing countenance told her companion that some of her own people were below.

“Red man,” said June, lifting a finger in admonition to be prudent.

“Four; and horrible in their paint and bloody trophies. Arrowhead is among them.”

June had moved to a corner, where several spare rifles had been deposited, and had already taken one into her hand, when the name of her husband appeared to arrest her movements. It was but for an instant, however, for she immediately went to the loop, and was about to thrust the muzzle of the piece through it, when a feeling of natural aversion induced Mabel to seize her arm.

“No, no, no ! June,” said the latter ; “not against your own husband, though my life be the penalty.”

“No hurt Arrowhead,” returned June, with

a slight shudder, "no hurt red man at all. No fire at 'em; only scare."

Mabel now comprehended the intention of June, and no longer opposed it. The latter thrust the muzzle of the rifle through the loop-hole; and taking care to make noise enough to attract attention, she pulled the trigger. The piece had no sooner been discharged than Mabel reproached her friend, for the very act that was intended to serve her.

"You declared it was not your intention to fire," she said, "and you may have destroyed your own husband."

"All run away before I fire," returned June laughing, and going to another loop to watch the movements of her friends, laughing still heartier. "See! get cover—every warrior. Think Salt-water and Quarter-Master here. Take good care now."

"Heaven be praised! And now, June, I may hope for a little time to compose my thoughts to prayer, that I may not die like Jennie, thinking only of life and the things of the world."

June laid aside the rifle, and came and seated herself near the box on which Mabel had sunk, under that physical reaction which accompanies joy as well as sorrow. She looked steadily in our heroine's face, and the latter thought that her countenance had an expression of severity mingled with its concern.

"Arrowhead great warrior," said the Tuscarora's wife. "All the girls of tribe look at him much. The pale-face beauty has eyes too?"

"June! — what do these words — that look imply? what would you say?"

"Why you so 'fraid June shoot Arrowhead?"

"Would it not have been horrible to see a wife destroy her own husband? No, June, rather would I have died myself."

"Very sure, dat all?"

"That was all, June, as God is my judge — and surely that was enough. No, no! there has been sufficient horrors to-day, without increasing them by an act like this. What other motive can you suspect?"

“ Don't know. . Poor Tuscarora girl very foolish. Arrowhead great chief, and look all round him. Talk of pale-face beauty in his sleep. Great chief like many wives.”

“ Can a chief possess more than one wife, June, among your people ?”

“ Have as many as he can keep. Great hunter marry often. Arrowhead got only June now ; but he look too much, see too much, talk too much of pale-face girl.”

Mabel was conscious of this fact, which had distressed her not a little, in the course of their journey ; but it shocked her to hear this allusion, coming, as it did, from the mouth of the wife herself. She knew that habit and opinions made great differences in such matters ; but, in addition to the pain and mortification she experienced at being the unwilling rival of a wife, she felt an apprehension that jealousy would be but an equivocal guarantee for her personal safety, in her present situation. A closer look at June, however, reassured her ; for while it was easy to trace in the unpractised features of this unsophisticated being, the pain of blighted

affections, no distrust could have tortured the earnest expression of her honest countenance into that of treachery or hate.

“ You will not betray me, June?” Mabel said, pressing the other’s hand, and yielding to an impulse of generous confidence. “ You will not give up one of your own sex to the tomahawk ?”

“ No tomahawk touch you. Arrowhead no let ’em. If June must have sister-wife, love to have you.”

“ No, June ; my religion, my feelings, both forbid it ; and, if I could be the wife of an Indian at all, I would never take the place that is yours, in a wigwam.”

June made no answer, but she looked gratified, and even grateful. She knew that few, perhaps no Indian girl, within the circle of Arrowhead’s acquaintance, could compare with herself in personal attractions ; and though it might suit her husband to marry a dozen wives, she knew of no one, beside Mabel, whose influence she could really dread. So keen an interest, however, had she taken in the beauty,

winning manners, kindness, and feminine gentleness of our heroine, that when jealousy came to chill these feelings, it had rather lent strength to that interest; and, under its wayward influence, had actually been one of the strongest of the incentives that had induced her to risk so much, in order to save her imaginary rival from the consequences of the attack that she so well knew was about to take place. In a word, June, with a wife's keenness of perception, had detected Arrowhead's admiration of Mabel; and instead of feeling that harrowing jealousy that might have rendered her rival hateful, as would have been apt to be the case with a woman unaccustomed to defer to the superior rights of the lordly sex, she had studied the looks and character of the pale-face beauty, until, meeting with nothing to repel her own feelings, but everything to encourage them, she had got to entertain an admiration and love for her, which, though certainly very different, was scarcely less strong than that of her husband's. Arrowhead himself had sent her to warn Mabel of the coming danger, though he was ignorant that

she had stolen upon the island, in the rear of the assailants, and was now intrenched in the citadel along with the object of their joint care. On the contrary, he supposed, as his wife had said, that Cap and Muir were in the block-house with Mabel, and that the attempt to repel him and his companions had been made by the men.

“ June sorry ‘ the Lily,’ ” for so the Indian, in her poetical language, had named our heroine — “ June sorry the Lily no marry Arrowhead. His wigwam big, and a great chief must get wives enough to fill it.”

“ I thank you, June, for this preference, which is not according to the notions of us white women,” returned Mabel, smiling in spite of the fearful situation in which she was placed ; “ but I may not, probably never shall, marry at all.”

“ Must have good husband,” said June ; “ marry Eau-douce, if don’t like Arrowhead.”

“ June ! this is not a fit subject for a girl who scarcely knows if she is to live another hour,

or not. I would obtain some signs of my dear uncle's being alive and safe, if possible."

"June go see."

"Can you?—will you?—would it be safe for you to be seen on the island? is your presence known to the warriors, and would they be pleased to find a woman on the war-path with them?"

All this Mabel asked in rapid connection, fearing that the answer might not be as she wished. She had thought it extraordinary that June should be of the party, and, improbable as it seemed, she had fancied that the woman had covertly followed the Iroquois in her own canoe, and had got in their advance, merely to give her the notice which had, probably, saved her life. But in all this she was mistaken, as June, in her imperfect manner, now found means to let her know.

Arrowhead, though a chief, was in disgrace with his own people, and was acting with the Iroquois, temporarily, though with a perfect understanding. He had a wigwam, it is true, but was seldom in it; feigning friendship for

the English, he had passed the summer ostensibly in their service, while he was, in truth, acting for the French, and his wife journeyed with him in his many migrations, most of the distances being passed over in canoes. In a word, her presence was no secret, her husband seldom moving without her. Enough of this to embolden Mabel to wish that her friend might go out, to ascertain the fate of her uncle, did June succeed in letting the other know; and it was soon settled between them, that the Indian woman should quit the blockhouse with that object, the moment a favourable opportunity offered.

They first examined the island, as thoroughly as their position would allow, from the different loops, and found that its conquerors were preparing for a feast, having seized upon the provisions of the English and rifled the huts. Most of the stores were in the blockhouse; but enough were found outside, to reward the Indians for an attack that had been attended by so little risk. A party had already removed the dead bodies, and Mabel saw that their arms

were collected in a pile, near the spot chosen for the banquet. June suggested that, by some signs which she understood, the dead, themselves, were carried into a thicket, and either buried, or concealed from view. None of the more prominent objects on the island, however, were disturbed, it being the desire of the conquerors to lure the party of the Sergeant into an ambush, on its return. June made her companion observe a man in a tree, a look-out, as she said, to give timely notice of the approach of any boat, although the departure of the expedition being so recent, nothing but some unexpected event would be likely to bring it back so soon. There did not appear to be any intention to attack the block-house immediately ; but every indication, as understood by June, rather showed that it was the intention of the Indians to keep it besieged until the return of the Sergeant's party, lest the signs of an assault should give a warning to eyes as practised as those of Pathfinder. The boat, however, had been secured and was removed to the spot where

the canoes of the Indians were hid in the bushes.

June now announced her intention to join her friends, the moment being particularly favourable for her to quit the blockhouse. Mabel felt some distrust as they descended the ladder ; but, at the next instant, she was ashamed of the feeling, as unjust to her companion, and unworthy of herself, and, by the time they both stood on the ground, her confidence was restored. The process of unbarring the door was conducted with the utmost caution ; and when the last bar was ready to be turned, June took her station near the spot where the opening must necessarily be. The bar was just turned free of the brackets, the door was opened merely wide enough to allow her body to pass, and June glided through the space. Mabel closed the door again, with a convulsive movement ; and, as the bar turned into its place, her heart beat audibly. She then felt secure ; and the two other bars were turned down in a more deliberate manner. When all was fast again, she ascended to the first floor,

where, alone, she could get a glimpse of what was going on without.

Long, and painfully melancholy hours passed, during which Mabel had no intelligence from June. She heard the yells of the savages, for liquor had carried them beyond the bounds of precaution; occasionally caught glimpses of their mad orgies through the loops; and, at all times, was conscious of their fearful presence, by sounds and sights that would have chilled the blood of one who had not so lately witnessed scenes so much more terrible. Toward the middle of the day, she fancied she saw a white man on the island, though his dress and wild appearance at first made her take him for a newly arrived savage. A view of his face, although it was swarthy naturally, and much darkened by exposure, left no doubt that her conjecture was true; and she felt as if there was now one of a species more like her own present, and one to whom she might appeal for succour in the last emergency. Mabel little knew, alas! how small was the influence exercised by the whites over their savage

allies, when the latter had begun to taste of blood ; or how slight, indeed, was the disposition to divert them from their cruelties.

The day seemed a month by Mabel's computation, and the only part of it that did not drag were the minutes spent in prayer. She had recourse to this relief from time to time ; and at each effort, she found her spirit firmer, her mind more tranquil, and her tendency to resignation more confirmed. She understood the reasoning of June, and believed it highly probable that the blockhouse would be left unmolested until the return of her father, in order to entice him into an ambuscade, and she felt much less apprehension of immediate danger in consequence ; but the future offered little ground of hope, and her thoughts had already begun to calculate the chances of her captivity. At such moments, Arrowhead and his offensive admiration filled a prominent place in the back-ground : for our heroine well knew that the Indians usually carried off to their villages, for the purposes of adoption, such captives as they did not slay ; and that many

instances had occurred in which individuals of her sex had passed the remainder of their lives in the wigwams of their conquerors. Such thoughts as these invariably drove her to her knees and to her prayers.

While the light lasted the situation of our heroine was sufficiently alarming; but as the shades of evening gradually gathered over the island, it became fearfully appalling. By this time the savages had wrought themselves up to the point of fury, for they had possessed themselves of all the liquor of the English; and their outcries and gesticulations were those of men truly possessed by evil spirits. All the efforts of their French leader to restrain them were entirely fruitless, and he had wisely withdrawn to an adjacent island, where he had a sort of bivouac, that he might keep at a safe distance from friends so apt to run into excesses. Before quitting the spot, however, this officer, at great risk to his own life, had succeeded in extinguishing the fire, and in securing the ordinary means to relight it. This precaution he took lest the Indians should burn the block-

house, the preservation of which was necessary to the success of his future plans. He would gladly have removed all the arms also, but this he found impracticable, the warriors clinging to their knives and tomahawks with the tenacity of men who regarded a point of honour as long as a faculty was left ; and to carry off the rifles, and leave behind him the very weapons that were generally used on such occasions, would have been an idle expedient. The extinguishing of the fire proved to be the most prudent measure ; for no sooner was the officer's back turned, than one of the warriors in fact proposed to fire the blockhouse. Arrowhead had also withdrawn from the group of drunkards, as soon as he found that they were losing their senses ; and had taken possession of a hut, where he had thrown himself on the straw, and sought the rest that two wakeful and watchful nights had rendered necessary. It followed that no one was left among the Indians to care for Mabel, if indeed any knew of her existence at all ; and the proposal of the drunkard was received with yells of delight by eight or ten

more, as much intoxicated and habitually as brutal as himself.

This was the fearful moment for Mabel. The Indians, in their present condition, were reckless of any rifles that the blockhouse might hold, though they did retain dim recollections of its containing living beings, an additional incentive to their enterprise; and they approached its base whooping and leaping like demons. As yet they were excited, not overcome, by the liquor they had drunk. The first attempt was made at the door, against which they ran in a body; but the solid structure, which was built entirely of logs, defied their efforts. The rush of a hundred men with the same object would have been useless. This Mabel, however, did not know; and her heart seemed to leap into her mouth as she heard the heavy shock at each renewed effort. At length, when she found that the door resisted these assaults as if it were of stone, neither trembling nor yielding, and only betraying its not being a part of the wall by rattling a little on its heavy hinges, her courage revived, and she

seized the first moment of a cessation to look down through the loop, in order if possible to learn the extent of her danger. A silence, for which it was not easy to account, stimulated her curiosity ; for nothing is so alarming to those who are conscious of the presence of imminent danger, as to be unable to trace its approach.

Mabel found that two or three of the Iroquois had been raking the embers, where they had found a few small coals, and with these they were endeavouring to light a fire. The interest with which they laboured, the hope of destroying, and the force of habit, enabled them to act intelligently and in unison, so long as their fell object was kept in view. A white man would have abandoned the attempt to light a fire in despair, with coals that came out of the ashes resembling sparks ; but these children of the forest had many expedients that were unknown to civilisation. By the aid of a few dry leaves, which they alone knew where to seek, a blaze was finally kindled, and then the addition of a few light sticks made sure of the

advantage that had been obtained. When Mabel stooped down over the loop, the Indians were making a pile of brush against the door, and as she remained gazing at their proceedings, she saw the twigs ignite, the flame dart from branch to branch, until the whole pile was cracking and snapping under a bright blaze. The Indians now gave a yell of triumph, and returned to their companions, well assured that the work of destruction was commenced. Mabel remained looking down, scarcely able to tear herself away from the spot, so intense and engrossing was the interest she felt in the progress of the fire. As the pile kindled throughout, however, the flames mounted, until they flashed so near her eyes, as to compel her to retreat. Just as she reached the opposite side of the room to which she had retired in her alarm, a forked stream shot up through the loop-hole, the lid of which she had left open, and illuminated the rude apartment, with Mabel and her desolation. Our heroine now naturally enough supposed that her hour was come; for the door, the only

means of retreat, had been blocked up by the brush and fire with hellish ingenuity, and she addressed herself, as she believed, for the last time, to her Maker in prayer. Her eyes were closed, and for more than a minute her spirit was abstracted ; but the interests of the world too strongly divided her feelings to be altogether suppressed ; and when they involuntarily opened again, she perceived that the streak of flame was no longer flaring in the room, though the wood around the little aperture had kindled, and the blaze was slowly mounting under the impulsion of a current of air that sucked inward. A barrel of water stood in a corner ; and Mabel, acting more by instinct than by reason, caught up a vessel, filled it, and pouring it on the wood with a trembling hand, succeeded in extinguishing the fire, at that particular spot. The smoke prevented her from looking down again, for a couple of minutes ; but when she did, her heart beat high with delight and hope, at finding that the pile of blazing brush had been overturned and scattered, and that water had

keen thrown on the logs of the door, which were still smoking, though no longer burning.

“Who is there?” said Mabel, with her mouth at the loop. “What friendly hand has a merciful Providence sent to my succour?”

A light footstep was audible below, and one of those gentle pushes at the door was heard, which just moved the massive beams on the hinges.

“Who wishes to enter? Is it you, dear, dear uncle?”

“Salt-water no here. St. Lawrence sweet water,” was the answer. “Open quick; want to come in.”

The step of Mabel was never lighter, or her movements more quick and natural, than while she was descending the ladder, and turning the bars, for all her motions were earnest and active. This time she thought only of her escape, and she opened the door with a rapidity that did not admit of caution. Her first impulse was to rush into the open air, in the blind hope of quitting the blockhouse; but June repulsed the attempt, and entering, she

coolly barred the door again, before she would notice Mabel's eager efforts to embrace her.

"Bless you ! bless you ! June," cried our heroine, most fervently ; "you are sent by Providence to be my guardian angel !"

"No hug so tight," answered the Tuscarora woman. "Pale-face woman all cry, or all laugh. Let June fasten door."

Mabel became more rational, and in a few minutes the two were again in the upper room, seated as before, hand in hand, all feeling of distrust or rivalry between them being banished, on the one side by the consciousness of favours received, and on the other by the consciousness of favours conferred.

"Now tell me, June," Mabel commenced as soon as she had given and received one warm embrace, "have you seen or heard aught of my poor uncle?"

"Don't know. No one see him ; no one hear him ; no one know any t'ing. Salt-water run into river, I t'ink, for I no find him. Quarter-Master gone too. I look, and look, and look ; but no see 'em, one, t'other, no where."

“Blessed be God ! They must have escaped, though the means are not known to us. I thought I saw a Frenchman on the island, June.”

“Yes: French captain come, but he go away, too. Plenty of Indian on island.”

“Oh ! June, June, are there no means to prevent my beloved father from falling into the hands of his enemies ?”

“Don’t know ; t’ink dat warriors wait in ambush, and Yengeese must lose scalp.”

“Surely, surely, June, you, who have done so much for the daughter, will not refuse to help the father ?”

“Don’t know fader, don’t love fader. June help her own people, help Arrowhead — husband love scalp.”

“June, this is not yourself. I cannot, will not believe, that you wish to see our men murdered !”

June turned her dark eyes quietly on Mabel ; and, for a moment, her look was stern, though it was soon changed into one of melancholy compassion.

“Lily, Yengeese girl?” she said, as one asks a question.

“Certainly, and as a Yengeese girl, I would save my countrymen from slaughter.”

“Very good, if can. June no Yengeese; June Tuscarora — got Tuscarora husband — Tuscarora heart — Tuscarora feeling — all over Tuscarora. Lily wouldn’t run and tell French that her fader was coming to gain victory?”

“Perhaps not,” returned Mabel, pressing a hand on a brain that felt bewildered, — “perhaps not; but you serve me, aid me — have saved me, June! Why have you done this, if you only feel as a Tuscarora?”

“Dont’t only feel as Tuscarora; feel as girl, feel as squaw. Love pretty Lily, and put it in my bosom.”

Mabel melted into tears, and she pressed the affectionate creature to her heart. It was near a minute before she could renew the discourse, but then she succeeded in speaking more calmly and with greater coherence.

“Let me know the worst, June,” she said.

“To-night, your people are feasting ; what do they intend to do to-morrow ?”

“Don’t know ; afraid to see Arrowhead, afraid to ask question ; t’ink hide away till Yengeese come back.”

“Will they not attempt anything against the blockhouse ? You have seen what they can threaten if they will.”

“Too much rum. Arrowhead sleep, or no dare ; French captain gone away, or no dare. All go to sleep, now.”

“And you think I am safe for this night, at least ?”

“Too much rum. If Lily like June, might do much for her people.”

“I am like you, June, if a wish to serve my countrymen can make a resemblance with one as courageous as yourself.”

“No, no, no !” muttered June in a low voice ; “no got heart, and June no let you, if had. June’s moder prisoner once, and warriors got drunk ; moder tomahawked ’em all. Such de way red-skin women do, when people in danger and want scalp.”

“ You say what is true,” returned Mabel, shuddering, and unconsciously dropping June’s hand. “ I cannot do that. I have neither the strength, the courage, nor the will to dip my hands in blood.”

“ T’ink that too ; then stay where you be—blockhouse good — got no scalp.”

“ You believe, then, that I am safe here, at least until my father and his people return ? ”

“ Know so. No dare touch blockhouse in morning. Hark ! all still now—drink rum till head fall down, and sleep like log.”

“ Might I not escape ? Are there not several canoes on the island ?—might I not get one, and go and give my father notice of what has happened.”

“ Know how to paddle ? ” demanded June, glancing her eye furtively at her companion.

“ Not so well as yourself, perhaps ; but enough to get out of sight before morning.”

“ What do then ? — couldn’t paddle six — ten — eight mile ! ”

“ I do not know ; I would do much to warn

my father, and the excellent Pathfinder, and all the rest, of the danger they are in."

"Like Pathfinder?"

"All like him who know him—you would like him, nay, love him, if you only knew his heart!"

"No like him, at all. Too good rifle—too good eye—too much shoot—Iroquois, and June's people. Must get his scalp if can."

"And I must save it, if I can, June. In this respect, then, we are opposed to each other. I will go and find a canoe the instant they are all asleep, and quit the island."

"No can—June won't let you. Call Arrowhead."

"June! you would not betray me—you could not give me up, after all you have done for me?"

"Just so," returned June, making a backward gesture with her hand, and speaking with a warmth and earnestness Mabel had never witnessed in her before. "Call Arrow head in loud voice. One call from wife, wake a warrior

up. June no let Lily help enemy — no let Indian hurt Lily.”

“ I understand you, June, and feel the nature and justice of your sentiments ; and, after all, it were better that I should remain here, for I have most probably overrated my strength. But, tell me one thing: if my uncle comes in the night, and asks to be admitted, you will let me open the door of the blockhouse that he may enter.”

“ Sartain — he prisoner here, and June like prisoner better than scalp ; scalp good for honour, prisoner good for feeling. But Salt-water hide so close, he don't know where he be, himself.”

Here June laughed, in her girlish mirthful way, for to her, scenes of violence were too familiar to leave impressions sufficiently deep to change her natural character. A long and discursive dialogue now followed, in which Mabel endeavoured to obtain clearer notions of her actual situation, under a faint hope that she might possibly be enabled to turn some of the facts she thus learned, to advantage. June

answered all her interrogatories, simply, but with a caution which showed she fully distinguished between that which was immaterial, and that which might endanger the safety, or embarrass the future operations of her friends. Our heroine was incapable of making an attempt to entrap her companion, though she plainly perceived, that, could she have been guilty of the meanness, she would have found the undertaking one of extreme difficulty. June, however, was not required to exercise more than a discreet discrimination about what she revealed; and the substance of the information she gave, may be summed up as follows.

Arrowhead had long been in communication with the French, though this was the first occasion on which he had ever, entirely, thrown aside the mask. He no longer intended to trust himself among the English, for he had discovered traces of distrust, particularly in Pathfinder; and with Indian bravado, he now rather wished to blazon than to conceal his treachery. He had led the party of warriors,

in the attack on the island, subject, however, to the supervision of the Frenchman who has been mentioned, though June declined saying whether he had been the means of discovering the position of a place, that had been thought to be so concealed from the eyes of the enemy, or not. On this point, she would say nothing; but she admitted that she and her husband had been watching the departure of the Scud, at the time they were overtaken, and captured by the cutter. The French had obtained their information of the precise position of the station, but very recently; and Mabel felt a pang, like that of some sharp instrument, piercing her heart, when she thought that there were covert allusions of the Indian woman, which would convey the meaning that the intelligence had come from a pale face, in the employment of Duncan of Lundie. This was intimated, however, rather than said; and when Mabel had time to reflect on her companion's words, and to remember how sententious and brief her periods were, she found room to hope that she had misunderstood her, and that Jasper West-

ern would yet come out of the affair, freed from every injurious imputation.

June did not hesitate to confess that she had been sent to the island to ascertain the precise number and the occupations of those who had been left on it, though she also betrayed in her *naïve* way, that the wish to serve Mabel had induced her principally to consent to come. In consequence of her report, and information otherwise obtained, the enemy was aware of precisely the force that could be brought against them. They also knew the number of men that had gone with Sergeant Dunham, and were acquainted with the object he had in view, though they were ignorant of the spot where he expected to meet the French boats. It would have been a pleasant sight to witness the eager desire of each of these two sincere females to ascertain all that might be of consequence to their respective friends; and yet the native delicacy with which each refrained from pressing the other to make revelations that would have been improper,—as well as the sensitive, almost intuitive, feeling

with which each avoided saying aught that might prove injurious to her own nation. As respects each other, there was perfect confidence; as regarded their respective people, entire fidelity. June was quite as anxious as Mabel could be on any other point to know where the Sergeant had gone, and when he was expected to return; but she abstained from putting the question, with a delicacy that would have done honour to the highest civilisation; nor did she once frame any other inquiry in a way to lead indirectly to a betrayal of the much-desired information on that particular point: though when Mabel of her own accord touched on any matter that might by possibility throw a light on the subject, she listened with an intentness that almost suspended respiration.

In this manner the hours passed away unheeded, for both were too much interested to think of rest. Nature asserted her rights, however, towards morning; and Mabel was persuaded to lie down on one of the straw beds provided for the soldiers, where she soon

fell into a deep sleep. June lay near her, and a quiet reigned on the whole island as profound as if the dominion of the forest had never been invaded by man.

When Mabel awoke, the light of the sun was streaming in through the loop-holes, and she found that the day was considerably advanced. June still lay near her, sleeping as tranquilly as if she reposed on—we will not say “down,” for the superior civilisation of our own times repudiates the simile—but on a French mattress, and as profoundly as if she had never experienced concern. The movements of Mabel, notwithstanding, soon awakened one so accustomed to vigilance; and then the two took a survey of what was passing around them, by means of the friendly apertures.

CHAPTER IV.

What had the Eternall Maker need of thee,
The world in his continuall course to keepe,
That doest all things deface? ne lettest see
The beautie of his worke? Indeede in sleepe,
The slouthfull body that doth love to steepe
His lustlesse limbs, and drowne his baser mind,
Doth praise thee oft, and oft from Stygian deepe,
Calles thee his goddesse, in his errour blind,
And great dame Nature's hand-maide, chearing every kind.

Faerie Queene.

THE tranquillity of the previous night was not contradicted by the movements of the day. Although Mabel and June went to every loop-hole, not a sign of the presence of a living being on the island was at first to be seen, themselves excepted. There was a smothered fire on the spot where M'Nab and his comrades had cooked, as if the smoke that curled upwards from it was intended as a lure to the absent; and all around the huts had been re-

stored to former order and arrangement. Mabel started involuntarily when her eye at length fell on a group of three men, dressed in the scarlet of the 55th, seated on the grass in lounging attitudes, as if they chatted in listless security; and her blood curdled as, on a second look, she traced the bloodless faces and glassy eyes of the dead. They were quite near the blockhouse, so near indeed as to have been overlooked at the first eager inquiry, and there was a mocking levity in their postures and gestures, for their limbs were stiffening in different attitudes, intended to resemble life, at which the soul revolted. Still, horrible as these objects were to those near enough to discover the frightful discrepancy between their assumed and their real characters, the arrangement had been made with so much art that it would have deceived a negligent observer at the distance of a hundred yards. After carefully examining the shores of the island, June pointed out to her companion the fourth soldier, seated, with his feet hanging over the water, his back fastened to a sapling, and holding a fish-

ing-rod in his hand. The scalpless heads were covered with the caps, and all appearance of blood had been carefully washed from each countenance.

Mabel sickened at this sight, which not only did so much violence to all her notions of propriety, but which was in itself so revolting, and so opposed to natural feeling. She withdrew to a seat, and hid her face in her apron for several minutes, until a low call from June again drew her to a loop-hole. The latter then pointed out the body of Jennie, seemingly standing in the door of a hut, leaning forward as if to look at the group of men, her cap fluttering in the wind, and her hand grasping a broom. The distance was too great to distinguish the features very accurately; but Mabel fancied that the jaw had been depressed, as if to distort the mouth into a sort of horrible laugh.

“June! June!” she exclaimed, “this exceeds all I have ever heard, or imagined as possible, in the treachery and artifices of your people.”

"Tuscarora very cunning," said June, in a way to show that she rather approved of, than condemned, the uses to which the dead bodies had been applied. "Do soldier no harm now ; do Iroquois good ; got the scalp, first ; now make bodies work. By and by, burn 'em."

This speech told Mabel how far she was separated from her friend in character ; and it was several minutes before she could again address her. But this temporary aversion was lost on June, who set about preparing their simple breakfast, in a way to show how insensible she was to feelings in others, that her own habits taught her to discard. Mabel ate sparingly, and her companion as if nothing had happened. Then they had leisure again for their thoughts, and for further surveys of the island. Our heroine, though devoured with a feverish desire to be always at the loops, seldom went that she did not immediately quit them in disgust, though compelled by her apprehensions to return again in a few minutes, called by the rustling of leaves, or the sighing of the wind. It was, indeed, a

solemn thing, to look out upon that deserted spot, peopled by the dead in the panoply of the living, and thrown into the attitudes and acts of careless merriment, and rude enjoyment. The effect on our heroine was much as if she had found herself an observer of the revelries of demons.

Throughout the livelong day, not an Indian nor a Frenchman was to be seen, and night closed over the frightful but silent masquerade, which the steady and unalterable progress with which the earth obeys her laws, indifferent to the petty actors, and petty scenes, that are in daily bustle and daily occurrence on her bosom. The night was far more quiet than that which had preceded it, and Mabel slept with an increasing confidence, for she now felt satisfied that her own fate would not be decided until the return of her father. The following day he was expected, however ; and when our heroine awoke, she ran eagerly to the loops in order to ascertain the state of the weather, and the aspect of the skies, as well as the condition of the island. There lounged the fearful group on

the grass ; the fisherman still hung over the water, seemingly intent on his sport ; and the distorted countenance of Jennie glared from out the hut, in horrible contortions. But the weather had changed : the wind blew fresh from the southward ; and though the air was bland, it was filled with the elements of storm.

“ This grows more and more difficult to bear, June,” Mabel said, when she left the window. “ I could even prefer to see the enemy, than to look any longer on this fearful array of the dead.”

“ Hush ! here they come. June thought hear a cry, like a warrior’s shout when he take a scalp.”

“ What mean you ? There is no more butchery !—there *can* be no more.”

“ Salt-water !” exclaimed June, laughing as she stood peeping through a loop-hole.

“ My dear uncle ! Thank God ! he then lives ! Oh ! June, June, *you* will not let them harm *him* ?”

“ June poor squaw. What warrior t’ink of what she say ? Arrowhead bring him here.”

By this time Mabel was at a loop; and, sure enough, there were Cap and the Quarter-Master in the hands of the Indians, eight or ten of whom were conducting them to the foot of the block; for, by this capture, the enemy now well knew that there could be no man in the building. Mabel scarcely breathed until the whole party stood ranged directly before the door, when she was rejoiced to see that the French officer was among them. A low conversation followed, in which both the white leader and Arrowhead spoke earnestly to their captives, when the Quarter-Master called out to her, in a voice loud enough to be heard,

“Pretty Mabel! Pretty Mabel!” he said, “look out of one of the loop-holes, and pity our condition. We are threatened with instant death, unless you open the door to the conquerors. Relent then, or we’ll no be wearing our scalps half an hour from this blessed moment.”

Mabel thought there were mockery and levity in this appeal, and its manner rather forti-

fied than weakened her resolution to hold the place as long as possible.

“Speak to me, uncle,” she said, with her mouth at a loop, “and tell me what I ought to do.”

“Thank God ! thank God !” ejaculated Cap ; “the sound of your sweet voice, Magnet, lightens my heart of a heavy load, for I feared you had shared the fate of poor Jennie. My breast has felt the last four-and-twenty hours as if a ton of kentledge had been stowed in it. You ask me what you ought to do, child, and I do not know how to advise you, though you are my own sister’s daughter ! The most I can say, just now, my poor girl ! is most heartily to curse the day you or I ever saw this bit of fresh water.”

“But, uncle, is your life in danger—do *you* think I ought to open the door ?”

“A round turn, and two half-hitches make a fast belay : and I would counsel no one, who is out of the hands of these devils, to unbar or unfasten anything, in order to fall into them. As to the Quarter-Master and myself, we are

both elderly men, and not of much account to mankind in general, as honest Pathfinder would say ; and it can make no great odds to him, whether he balances the purser's books this year or the next ; and as for myself, why, if I were on the seaboard, I should know what to do ; but up here, in this watery wilderness, I can only say, that if I were behind that bit of a bulwark, it would take a good deal of Indian logic to rouse me out of it."

" You'll no be minding all your uncle says, pretty Mabel," put in Muir, " for distress is obviously fast unsettling his faculties, and he is far from calculating all the necessities of the emergency. We are in the hands, here, of very considerate and gentlemanly pairsons, it must be acknowledged, and one has little occasion to apprehend disagreeable violence. The casualties that have occurred, are the common incidents of war, and can no change our sentiments of the enemy, for they are far from indicating that any injustice will be done the prisoners. I'm sure that neither Master Cap, nor myself, has any cause of complaint, since we

have given ourselves up to Master Arrowhead, who reminds me of a Roman, or a Spartan, by his virtues and moderation; but ye'll be remembering that usages differ, and that our scalps may be lawful sacrifices to appease the manes of fallen foes, unless you save them by capitulation."

"I shall do wiser to keep within the block-house, until the fate of the island is settled," returned Mabel. "Our enemies can feel no concern on account of one like me, knowing that I can do them no harm; and I greatly prefer to remain here, as more befitting my sex and years."

"If nothing but your convenience were concerned, Mabel, we should all cheerfully acquiesce in your wishes; but these gentlemen fancy that the work will aid their operations, and they have a strong desire to possess it. To be frank with you, finding myself, and your uncle, in a very peculiar situation, I acknowledge that, to avert consequences, I have assumed the power that belongs to His Majesty's commission, and entered

into a verbal capitulation, by which I have engaged to give up the blockhouse, and the whole island. It is the fortune of war, and must be submitted to; so open the door, pretty Mabel, forthwith, and confide yourself to the care of those who know how to treat beauty and virtue in distress. There's no courtier in Scotland more complaisant than this chief, or who is more familiar with the laws of decorum."

"No leave blockhouse," muttered June, who stood at Mabel's side, attentive to all that passed. "Blockhouse good — got no scalp."

Our heroine might have yielded but for this appeal; for it began to appear to her that the wisest course would be to conciliate the enemy by concessions, instead of exasperating them by resistance. They must know that Muir and her uncle were in their power, that there was no man in the building; and she fancied they might proceed to batter down the door, or cut their way through the logs with axes, if she obstinately refused to give them

peaceable admission, since there was no longer any reason to dread the rifle. But the words of June induced her to hesitate; and the earnest pressure of the hand and entreating looks of her companion strengthened a resolution that was faltering.

“No prisoner yet,” whispered June, “let ’em make prisoner, before ’ey take prisoner—talk big; June manage e’m.”

Mabel now began to parley more resolutely with Muir, for her uncle seemed disposed to quiet his conscience by holding his tongue; and she plainly intimated that it was not her intention to yield the building.

“You forget the capitulation, Mistress Mabel,” said Muir; “the honour of one of His Majesty’s servants is concerned; and the honour of His Majesty, through his servant. You will remember the finesse and delicacy that belong to military honour?”

“I know enough, Mr. Muir, to understand that you have no command in this expedition, and therefore can have no right to yield the blockhouse; and I remember, moreover, to

have heard my dear father say that a prisoner loses all his authority for the time being."

"Rank sophistry, pretty Mabel, and treason to the King, as well as dishonouring his commission, and discrediting his name. You'll no be persevering in your intentions, when your better judgment has had leisure to reflect and to make conclusions on matters and circumstances."

"Ay," put in Cap, "this is a circumstance, and be d——d to it!"

"No mind what 'e uncle say," ejaculated June, who was occupied in a far corner of the room. "Blockhouse good,—got no scalp."

"I shall remain as I am, Mr. Muir, until I get some tidings of my father. He will return in the course of the next ten days."

"Ah! Mabel; this artifice will no deceive the enemy, who, by means that would be unintelligible, did not our suspicions rest on an unhappy young man with too much plausibility, are familiar with all our doings and plans, and well know that the sun will not set before the worthy Sergeant and his companions

will be in their power. Aweel! Submission to Providence is truly a Christian virtue!"

"Mr. Muir, you appear to be deceived in the strength of this work, and to fancy it weaker than it is. Do you desire to see what I can do in the way of defence, if so disposed?"

"I dinna' mind if I do," answered the Quarter-master, who always grew Scotch as he grew interested.

"What do you think of that, then? Look at the loop of the upper story."

As soon as Mabel had spoken, all eyes were turned upward, and beheld the muzzle of a rifle cautiously thrust through a hole; June having resorted again to a *ruse* that had already proved so successful. The result did not disappoint expectation. No sooner did the Indians catch a sight of the fatal weapon, than they leaped aside, and in less than a minute, every man among them had sought a cover. The French officer kept his eye on the barrel of the piece, in order to ascertain that it was not pointed in his particular direction, and he

coolly took a pinch of snuff. As neither Muir nor Cap had anything to apprehend from the quarter in which the others were menaced, they kept their ground.

“Be wise, my pretty Mabel, be wise!” exclaimed the former; “and no be provoking useless contention. In the name of all the kings of Albin, who have ye closeted with you in that wooden tower, that seemeth so bloody-minded? There is necromancy about this matter, and all our characters may be involved in the explanation.”

“What do ye think of the Pathfinder, Master Muir, for a garrison to so strong a post!” cried Mabel, resorting to an equivocation that the circumstances rendered very excusable. “What will your French and Indian companions think of the aim of the Pathfinder’s rifle?”

“Bear gently on the unfortunate, pretty Mabel, and do not confound the King’s servants—may Heaven bless him and all his royal lineage!—with the King’s enemies. If Pathfinder be indeed in the blockhouse, let him speak,

and we will hold our negotiations directly with him. He knows us as friends, and we fear no evil at his hands, and least of all to myself; for a generous mind is apt to render rivalry in a certain interest, a sure ground of respect and amity; since admiration of the same woman proves a community of feeling and tastes."

The reliance on Pathfinder's friendship did not extend beyond the Quarter-master and Cap, however, for even the French officer, who had hitherto stood his ground so well, shrunk back at the sound of the terrible name. So unwilling, indeed, did this individual, a man of iron nerves, and one long accustomed to the dangers of the peculiar warfare in which he was engaged, appear to remain exposed to the assaults of Killdeer, whose reputation throughout all that frontier was as well established as that of Marlborough in Europe, that he did not disdain to seek a cover, insisting that his two prisoners should follow him. Mabel was too glad to be rid of her enemies to lament the departure of her friends, though she kissed her

hand to Cap, through the loop, and called out to him in terms of affection, as he moved slowly and unwillingly away.

The enemy now seemed disposed to abandon all attempts on the blockhouse, for the present; and June, who had ascended to a trap in the roof, whence the best view was to be obtained, reported that the whole party had assembled to eat, on a distant and sheltered part of the island, where Muir and Cap were quietly sharing in the good things that were going, as if they had no concern on their minds. This information greatly relieved Mabel, and she began to turn her thoughts again to the means of effecting her own escape, or at least of letting her father know of the danger that awaited him. The Sergeant was expected to return that afternoon, and she knew that a moment gained or lost, might decide his fate.

Three or four hours flew by. The island was again buried in a profound quiet, the day was wearing away, and yet Mabel had decided on nothing. June was in the basement pre-

paring their frugal meal, and Mabel herself had ascended to the roof, which was provided with a trap that allowed her to go out on the top of the building, whence she commanded the best view of surrounding objects that the island possessed ; still it was limited, and much obstructed by the tops of trees. The anxious girl did not dare to trust her person in sight, knowing well that the unrestrained passions of some savage might induce him to send a bullet through her brain. She merely kept her head out of the trap, therefore, whence, in the course of the afternoon, she made as many surveys of the different channels about the island, as “ Anne, sister Anne ” took of the environs of the castle of Blue Beard.

The sun had actually set : no intelligence had been received from the boats, and Mabel ascended to the roof, to take a last look, hoping that the party would arrive in the darkness ; which would at least prevent the Indians from rendering their ambuscade as fatal as it might otherwise prove, and which

possibly might enable her to give some more intelligible signal, by means of fire, than it would otherwise be in her power to do. Her eye had turned carefully round the whole horizon, and she was just on the point of drawing in her person, when an object that struck her as new, caught her attention. The islands lay grouped so closely, that six or eight different channels or passages between them were in view ; and in one of the most covered, concealed in a great measure by the bushes of the shore, lay what a second look assured her was a bark canoe. It contained a human being, beyond a question. Confident, that if an enemy, her signal could do no harm, and, if a friend, that it might do good, the eager girl waved a little flag towards the stranger, which she had prepared for her father, taking care that it should not be seen from the island.

Mabel had repeated her signal eight or ten times in vain, and she began to despair of its being noticed, when a sign was given in return, by the wave of a paddle, and the man so far discovered himself, as to let her see it was

Chingachgook. Here, then, at last, was a friend; one, too, who was able, and she doubted not would be willing to aid her. From that instant her courage and her spirits revived. The Mohican had seen her; must have recognised her, as he knew that she was of the party; and no doubt, as soon as it was sufficiently dark, he would take the steps necessary to release her. That he was aware of the presence of the enemy was apparent by the great caution he observed, and she had every reliance on his prudence and address. The principal difficulty now existed with June; for Mabel had seen too much of her fidelity to her own people, relieved as it was by sympathy for herself, to believe she would consent to a hostile Indian's entering the blockhouse, or indeed, to her leaving it, with a view to defeat Arrowhead's plans. The half hour that succeeded the discovery of the presence of the Great Serpent, was the most painful of Mabel Dunham's life. She saw the means of effecting all she wished, as it might be within reach of her hand, and yet it eluded her grasp. She

knew June's decision and coolness, notwithstanding all her gentleness and womanly feeling; and at last she came reluctantly to the conclusion, that there was no other way of attaining her end than by deceiving her tried companion and protector. It was revolting to one as sincere and natural, as pure of heart, and as much disposed to ingenuousness as Mabel Dunham, to practise deception on a friend like June; but her own father's life was at stake, her companion would receive no positive injury, and she had feelings and interests directly touching herself, that would have removed greater scruples.

As soon as it was dark, Mabel's heart began to beat with increased violence; and she adopted and changed her plan of proceeding, at least a dozen times in the course of a single hour. June was always the source of her greatest embarrassment; for she did not well see, first, how she was to ascertain when Chingachgook was at the door, where she doubted not he would soon appear; and, secondly, how she was to admit him, without giving the alarm

to her watchful companion. Time pressed, however; for the Mohican might come and go away again, unless she was ready to receive him. It would be too hazardous to the Delaware to remain long on the island; and it became absolutely necessary to determine on some course, even at the risk of choosing one that was indiscreet. After running over various projects in her mind, therefore, Mabel came to her companion, and said, with as much calmness as she could assume,—

“Are you not afraid, June, now your people believe Pathfinder is in the blockhouse, that they will come, and try to set it on fire?”

“No t’ink such t’ing. No burn blockhouse. Blockhouse good; got no scalp.”

“June, we cannot know. They hid, because they believed what I told them of Pathfinder’s being with us.”

“Believe fear. Fear come quick, go quick. Fear make run away; wit make come back. Fear make warrior fool, as well as young girl.”

Here June laughed, as her sex is apt to laugh, when anything particularly ludicrous crosses their youthful fancies.

“I feel uneasy, June; and wish you yourself would go up again to the roof, and look out upon the island, to make certain that nothing is plotting against us; you know the signs of what your people intend to do better than I.”

“June go, Lily wish; but very well know that Indian sleep: wait for 'e fader. Warrior eat, drink, sleep, all time, when don't fight and go on war-trail. Den never sleep, eat, drink—never feel. Warrior sleep now.”

“God send it may be so! but go up, dear June, and look well about you. Danger may come when we least expect it.”

June arose, and prepared to ascend to the roof; but she paused, with her foot on the first round of the ladder. Mabel's heart beat so violently, that she was fearful its throbs would be heard; and she fancied that some gleamings of her real intentions had crossed the mind of her friend. She was right in part,

the Indian woman having actually stopped to consider whether there was any indiscretion in what she was about to do. At first, the suspicion that Mabel intended to escape flashed across her mind ; then she rejected it, on the ground that the pale-face had no means of getting off the island, and that the blockhouse was much the most secure place she could find. The next thought was, that Mabel had detected some sign of the near approach of her father. This idea, too, lasted but an instant ; for June entertained some such opinion of her companion's ability to understand symptoms of this sort — symptoms that had escaped her own sagacity — as a woman of high fashion entertains of the accomplishments of her maid. Nothing else in the same way offering, she began slowly to mount the ladder.

Just as she reached the upper floor, a lucky thought suggested itself to our heroine ; and, by expressing it in a hurried, but natural manner, she gained a great advantage in executing her projected scheme.

“I will go down,” she said, “and listen by

the door, June, while you are on the roof; and we will thus be on our guard, at the same time, above and below."

Though June thought this savoured of unnecessary caution, well knowing no one could enter the building unless aided from within, nor any serious danger menace them from the exterior without giving sufficient warning, she attributed the proposition to Mabel's ignorance and alarm; and, as it was made apparently with frankness, it was received without distrust. By these means our heroine was enabled to descend to the door, as her friend ascended to the roof; and June felt no unusual inducement to watch her. The distance between the two was now too great to admit of conversation; and, for three or four minutes, one was occupied in looking about her as well as the darkness would allow, and the other in listening at the door with as much intentness as if all her senses were absorbed in the single faculty of hearing.

June discovered nothing from her elevated stand: the obscurity indeed almost forbade

the hope of such a result; but it would not be easy to describe the sensation with which Mabel thought she perceived a slight and guarded push against the door. Fearful that all might not be as she wished, and anxious to let Chingachgook know that she was near, she began, though in tremulous and low notes, to sing. So profound was the stillness at the moment that the sound of the unsteady warbling ascended to the roof, and in a minute June began to descend. A slight tap at the door was heard immediately after. Mabel was bewildered, for there was no time to lose. Hope proved stronger than fear; and, with unsteady hands, she commenced unbarring the door. The moccasin of June was heard on the floor above her, when only a single bar was turned. The second was released as her form reached half-way down the lower ladder.

“What you do?” exclaimed June, angrily. “Run away—mad—leave blockhouse? blockhouse good.” The hands of both were on the last bar, and it would have been cleared from the fastenings, but for a vigorous shove from

without, which jammed the wood. A short struggle ensued, though both were disinclined to violence. June would probably have prevailed, had not another and a more vigorous push from without forced the bar past the trifling impediment that held it, when the door opened. The form of a man was seen to enter ; and both the females rushed up the ladder, as if equally afraid of the consequences. The stranger secured the door ; and, first examining the lower room with great care, he cautiously ascended the ladder. June, as soon as it became dark, had closed the loops of the principal floor, and lighted a candle. By means of this dim taper, then, the two females stood in expectation, waiting to ascertain the person of their visiter, whose wary ascent of the ladder was distinctly audible, though sufficiently deliberate. It would not be easy to say which was the more astonished on finding, when the stranger had got through the trap, that Pathfinder stood before them !

“ God be praised ! ” Mabel exclaimed, for the idea that the blockhouse would be impreg-

nable with such a garrison at once crossed her mind. "O Pathfinder! what has become of my father?"

"The Sergeant is safe as yet, and victorious; though it is not in the gift of man to say what will be the end of it. Is not that the wife of Arrowhead skulking in the corner, there?"

"Speak not of her reproachfully, Pathfinder; I owe her my life, my present security. Tell me what has happened to my father's party—why you are here; and I will relate all the horrible events that have passed upon this island."

"Few words will do the last, Mabel; for one used to Indian devilries needs but little explanations on such a subject. Everything turned out as we had hoped with the expedition; for the Sarpent was on the look out, and he met us with all the information heart could desire. We ambushed three boats, drove the Frenchers out of them, got possession and sunk them, according to orders, in the deepest part of the channel; and the savages of Upper Canada will fare badly for Indian goods this

winter. Both powder and ball too will be scarcer among them than keen hunters and active warriors may relish. We did not lose a man, or have even a skin barked; nor do I think the enemy suffered to speak of. In short, Mabel, it has been just such an expedition as Lundie likes; much harm to the foe, and little harm to ourselves."

"Ah! Pathfinder, I fear when Major Duncan comes to hear the whole of the sad tale, he will find reason to regret he ever undertook the affair."

"I know what you mean, I know what you mean; but by telling my story straight you will understand it better. As soon as the Sergeant found himself successful, he sent me and the Sarpent off in canoes to tell you how matters had turned out, and he is following with the two boats, which being so much heavier, cannot arrive before morning. I parted from Chingachgook this forenoon, it being agreed that he should come up one set of channels, and I another, to see that the path was clear. I've not seen the chief since."

Mabel now explained the manner in which she had discovered the Mohican, and her expectation that he would yet come to the block-house.

“Not he, not he! A regular scout will never get behind walls or logs, so long as he can keep the open air and find useful employment. I should not have come myself, Mabel; but I promised the Sergeant to comfort you, and to look after your safety. Ah’s me! I reconnoitered the island with a heavy heart this forenoon; and there was a bitter hour when I fancied you might be among the slain.”

“By what lucky accident were you prevented from paddling up boldly to the island, and from falling into the hands of the enemy?”

“By such an accident, Mabel, as Providence employs to tell the hound where to find the deer, and the deer how to throw off the hound. No, no! these artifices and devilries with dead bodies may deceive the soldiers of the 55th, and the King’s officers; but they are all lost upon men who have passed their days in the forest. I came down the channel in face of

the pretended fisherman; and, though the riptyles have set up the poor wretch with art, it was not ingenious enough to take in a practysed eye. The rod was held too high, for the 55th have learned to fish at Oswego, if they never knew how before; and then the man was too quiet for one who got neither prey nor bite. But we never come in upon a post blindly; and I have lain outside a garrison a whole night, because they had changed their sentries and their mode of standing guard. Neither the Sarpent nor myself would be likely to be taken in by these clumsy contrivances, which were most probably intended for the Scotch, who are cunning enough in some particulars, though anything but witches when Indian sarcumventions are in the wind."

"Do you think my father and his men may yet be deceived?" said Mabel, quickly.

"Not if I can prevent it, Mabel. You say the Sarpent is on the look-out too; so there is a double chance of our succeeding in letting him know his danger; though it is by no means sartain by which channel the party may come."

“Pathfinder,” said our heroine solemnly, for the frightful scenes she had witnessed had clothed death with unusual horrors: “Pathfinder, you have professed love for me, a wish to make me your wife?”

“I did ventur’ to speak on that subject, Mabel, and the Sergeant has even lately said that you are kindly disposed; but I am not a man to persecute the thing I love.”

“Hear me, Pathfinder—I respect you, honour you, revere you—save my father from this dreadful death, and I can worship you. Here is my hand, as a solemn pledge for my faith, when you come to claim it.”

“Bless you, bless you, Mabel: this is more than I deserve—more, I fear, than I shall know how to profit by as I ought. It was not wanting, however, to make me sarve the Sergeant. We are old comrades, and owe each other a life; though I fear me, Mabel, being a father’s comrade is not always the best recommendation with the daughter.”

“You want no other recommendation than your own acts—your courage, your fidelity.

All that you do and say, Pathfinder, my reason approves, and the heart will, nay it *shall*, follow."

"This is a happiness I little expected this night; but we are in God's hands, and he will protect us in his own way. These are sweet words, Mabel; but they were not wanting to make me do all that man can do, in the present circumstances; they will not lessen my endeavours, neither."

"Now we understand each other, Pathfinder," Mabel added, hoarsely, "let us not lose one of the precious moments, which may be of incalculable value. Can we not get into your canoe, and go and meet my father?"

"That is not the course I advise. I don't know by which channel the Sergeant will come, and there are twenty; rely on it, the Sarpent will be winding his way through them all. No, no! my advice is to remain here. The logs of this blockhouse are still green, and it will not be easy to set them on fire; and I can make good the place, bating a burning, ag'in a tribe. The Iroquois nation cannot dislodge me from

this fortress, so long as we can keep the flames off it. The Sergeant is now 'camped on some island, and will not come in until morning. If we hold the block, we can give him timely warning, by firing rifles for instance; and should he determine to attack the savages, as a man of his temper will be very likely to do, the possession of this building will be of great account in the affair. No, no! my judgment says remain, if the object be to sarve the Sergeant; though escape for our two selves will be no very difficult matter."

"Stay," murmured Mabel, "stay, for God's sake, Pathfinder. Anything, everything, to save my father!"

"Yes, that is natur'. I am glad to hear you say this, Mabel, for I own a wish to see the Sergeant fairly supported. As the matter now stands, he has gained himself credit; and could he once drive off these miscreants, and make an honourable retreat, laying the huts and block in ashes, no doubt, no doubt, Lundie would remember it and sarve him accordingly. Yes, yes, Mabel, we must not only

save the Sergeant's life, but we must save his reputation."

"No blame can rest on my father, on account of the surprise of this island."

"There's no telling, there's no telling; military glory is a most unsartain thing. I've seen the Delawares routed, when they desarved more credit than at other times when they've carried the day. A man is wrong to set his head on success of any sort, and worst of all on success in war. I know little of the settlements, or of the notions that men hold in them; but up hereaway even the Indians rate a warrior's character according to his luck. The principal thing with a soldier is never to be whipt; nor do I think mankind stops long to consider how the day was won or lost. For my part, Mabel, I make it a rule when facing the inimy to give him as good as I can send, and to try to be moderate as I can when we get the better. As for feeling moderate after a defeat, little need be said on that score, as a flogging is one of the most humbling things in natur'.

The parsons preach about humility, in the garrisons; but if humility would make Christians, the King's troops ought to be saints, for they've done little as yet this war but take lessons from the French, beginning at Fort du Quesne and ending at Ty."

"My father could not have suspected that the position of the island was known to the enemy," resumed Mabel, whose thoughts were running on the probable effect of the recent events on the Sergeant.

"That is true; nor do I well see how the Frenchers found it out. The spot is well chosen, and it is not an easy matter, even for one who has travelled the road to and from it, to find it again. There has been treachery, I fear; yes, yes, there must have been treachery."

"O Pathfinder! can this be?"

"Nothing is easier, Mabel, for treachery comes as nat'ral to some men as eating. Now when I find a man all fair words, I look close to his deeds; for when the heart is right, and really intends to do good, it is generally

satisfied to let the conduct speak, instead of the tongue."

"Jasper Western is not one of these," said Mabel impetuously. "No youth can be more sincere in his manner, or less apt to make the tongue act for the head."

"Jasper Western ! tongue and heart are both right with that lad, depend on it, Mabel ; and the notion taken up by Lundie, and the Quarter-Master, and the Sergeant, and your uncle too, is as wrong as it would be to think that the sun shone by night and the stars shone by day. No, no ; I'll answer for Eau-Douce's honesty with my own scalp, or, at need, with my own rifle."

"Bless you, bless you, Pathfinder !" exclaimed Mabel, extending her own hand, and pressing the iron fingers of her companion, under a state of feeling that far surpassed her own consciousness of its strength. "You are all that is generous, all that is noble ; God will reward you for it."

"Ah ! Mabel, I fear me, if this be true, I should not covet such a wife as yourself ;

but would leave you to be sued for by some gentleman of the garrison, as your desarts require."

"We will not talk of this any more to-night," Mabel answered, in a voice so smothered, as to seem nearly choked. "We must think less of ourselves just now, Pathfinder, and more of our friends. But I rejoice from my soul that you believe Jasper innocent. Now let us talk of other things—ought we not to release June?"

"I've been thinking about the woman; for it will not be safe to shut our eyes and leave hers open, on this side of the blockhouse door. If we put her in the upper room, and take away the ladder, she'll be a prisoner at least."

"I cannot treat one thus who has saved my life. It would be better to let her depart, for I think she is too much my friend to do anything to harm me."

"You do not know the race, Mabel, you do not know the race. It's true, she is not a full-blooded Mingo, but she consorts with the vagabonds and must have larned some of their tricks.—What is that?"

“It sounds like oars; some boat is passing through the channel.”

Pathfinder closed the trap that led to the lower room, to prevent June from escaping, extinguished the candle, and went hastily to a loop, Mabel looking over his shoulder in breathless curiosity. These several movements consumed a minute or two; and by the time the eye of the scout had got a dim view of things without, two boats had swept past, and shot up to the shore, at a spot some fifty yards beyond the block, where there was a regular landing. The obscurity prevented more from being seen; and Pathfinder whispered to Mabel, that the new-comers were as likely to be foes as friends, for he did not think her father could possibly have arrived so soon. A number of men were now seen to quit the boats, and then followed three hearty English cheers, leaving no further doubts of the character of the party. Pathfinder sprang to the trap, raised it, glided down the ladder, and began to unbar the door, with an earnestness that proved how critical he deemed the moment.

Mabel had followed, but she rather impeded than aided his exertions, and but a single bar was turned when a heavy discharge of rifles was heard. They were still standing in breathless suspense, as the war-whoop rang in all the surrounding thickets. The door now opened, and both Pathfinder and Mabel rushed into the open air. All human sounds had ceased. After listening half a minute, however, Pathfinder thought he heard a few stifled groans near the boats; but the wind blew so fresh, and the rustling of the leaves mingled so much with the murmurs of the passing air, that he was far from certain. But Mabel was borne away by her feelings, and she rushed by him, taking the way towards the boats.

"This will not do, Mabel," said the scout, in an earnest but low voice, seizing her by an arm; "this will never do. Sartain death would follow, and that without saving any one. We must return to the block."

"Father! my poor, dear, murdered father!" said the girl wildly, though habitual caution, even at that trying moment, induced her to speak

low. "Pathfinder, if you love me, let me go to my dear father."

"This will not do, Mabel. It is singular that no one speaks; no one returns the fire from the boats; and I have left Killdeer in the block! But of what use would a rifle be when no one is to be seen?"

At that moment, the quick eye of Pathfinder, which, while he held Mabel firmly in his grasp, had never ceased to roam over the dim scene, caught an indistinct view of five or six dark crouching forms, endeavouring to steal past him, doubtless, with the intention of intercepting the retreat to the blockhouse. Catching up Mabel, and putting her under an arm, as if she were an infant, the sinewy frame of the woodsman was exerted to the utmost, and he succeeded in entering the building. The tramp of his pursuers seemed immediately at his heels. Dropping his burthen, he turned, closed the door, and had fastened one bar, as a rush against the solid mass threatened to force it from the hinges. To secure the other bars was the work of an instant.

Mabel now ascended to the first floor, while Pathfinder remained as a sentinel below. Our heroine was in that state in which the body exerts itself, apparently without the control of the mind. She relighted the candle mechanically, as her companion had desired, and returned with it below, where he was waiting her reappearance. No sooner was Pathfinder in possession of the light than he examined the place carefully, to make certain no one was concealed in the fortress, ascending to each floor in succession, after assuring himself that he left no enemy in his rear. The result was the conviction that the blockhouse now contained no one but Mabel and himself, June having escaped. When perfectly convinced on this material point, Pathfinder rejoined our heroine in the principal apartment, setting down the light and examining the priming of killdeer before he seated himself.

“Our worst fears are realised!” said Mabel, to whom the hurry and excitement of the last five minutes appeared to contain the emotions of a life. “My beloved father, and all his party, are slain or captured!”

“ We don’t know that — morning will tell us all. I do not think the affair as settled as that, or we should hear the vagabond Mingos yelling out their triumph around the block-house. Of one thing, we may be sartain ; if the inimy has really got the better, he will not be long in calling upon us to surrender. The squaw will let him into the secret of our situation ; and, as they well know the place cannot be fired by daylight, so long as killdeer continues to deserve his reputation, you may depend on it, that they will not be backward in making their attempt, while darkness helps them.”

“ Surely, I hear a groan !”

“ ’Tis fancy, Mabel ; when the mind gets to be skeary, especially a woman’s mind, she often concaits things that have no reality. I’ve known them that imagined there was truth in dreams—”

“ Nay, I am *not* deceived ; there is surely one below, and in pain.”

Pathfinder was compelled to own that the quick senses of Mabel had not deceived her. He cautioned her, however, to repress her feel-

ings; and reminded her that the savages were in the practice of resorting to every artifice to attain their ends, and that nothing was more likely than that the groans were feigned with a view to lure them from the blockhouse, or, at least, to induce them to open the door.

“No, no, no!” said Mabel, hurriedly; “there is no artifice in those sounds, and they come from anguish of body, if not of spirit. They are fearfully natural.”

“Well, we shall soon know whether a friend is there, or not. Hide the light again, Mabel, and I will speak the person from a loop.”

Not a little precaution was necessary, according to Pathfinder’s judgment and experience, in performing even this simple act; for he had known the careless slain by their want of proper attention to, what might have seemed to the ignorant supererogatory means of safety. He did not place his mouth to the loop itself, but so near it that he could be heard without raising his voice, and the same precaution was observed as regards his ear.

“Who is below?” Pathfinder demanded,

when his arrangements were made to his mind.

“Is any one in suffering? If a friend, speak boldly, and depend on our aid.”

“Pathfinder!” answered a voice that both Mabel and the person addressed at once knew to be the Sergeant’s—“Pathfinder, in the name of God, tell me what has become of my daughter?”

“Father, I am here! unhurt, safe, and oh that I could think the same of you!”

The ejaculation of thanksgiving that followed was distinctly audible to the two, but it was clearly mingled with a groan of pain.

“My worst forebodings are realised!” said Mabel, with a sort of desperate calmness. “Pathfinder, my father must be brought within the block, though we hazard everything to do it.”

“This is natur’, and it is the law of God. But, Mabel, be calm, and endivour to be cool. All that can be effected for the Sergeant by human invention, shall be done. I only ask you to be cool.”

“I am, I am, Pathfinder. Never in my life

was I more calm, more collected, than at this moment. But remember how perilous may be every instant; for Heaven's sake, what we do, let us do without delay."

Pathfinder was struck with the firmness of Mabel's tones, and perhaps he was a little deceived by the forced tranquillity and self-possession she had assumed. At all events, he did not deem any farther explanations necessary, but descended forthwith, and began to unbar the door. This delicate process was conducted with the usual caution, but as he warily permitted the mass of timber to swing back on the hinges, he felt a pressure against it, that had nearly induced him to close it again. But catching a glimpse of the cause through the crack, the door was permitted to swing back, when the body of Sergeant Dunham, which was propped against it, fell partly within the block. To draw in the legs and secure the fastenings, occupied the Pathfinder but a moment. Then there existed no obstacle to their giving their undivided care to the wounded man.

Mabel, in this trying scene, conducted her-

self with the sort of unnatural energy that her sex, when aroused, is apt to manifest. She got the light, administered water to the parched lips of her father, and assisted Pathfinder in forming a bed of straw for his body, and a pillow of clothes for his head. All this was done earnestly, and almost without speaking; nor did Mabel shed a tear, until she heard the blessings of her father murmured on her head for this tenderness and care. All this time Mabel had merely conjectured the condition of her parent. Pathfinder, however, had shown greater attention to the physical danger of the Sergeant. He had ascertained that a rifle-ball had passed through the body of the wounded man; and he was sufficiently familiar with injuries of this nature to be certain that the chances of his surviving the hurt were very trifling, if any.

CHAPTER V.

Then drink my tears, while yet they fall —
Would that my bosom's blood were balm ;
And — well thou knowest — I 'd shed it all,
To give thy brow one minute's calm.

MOORE.

THE eyes of Sergeant Dunham had not ceased to follow the form of his beautiful daughter from the moment that the light appeared. He next examined the door of the block, to ascertain its security ; for he was left on the ground below, there being no available means of raising him to the upper floor. Then he sought the face of Mabel ; for as life wanes fast the affections resume their force, and we begin to value that most which we feel we are about to lose for ever.

“ God be praised ! my child, you, at least,

have escaped their murderous rifles," he said; for he spoke with strength, and seemingly with no additional pain. "Give me the history of this sad business, Pathfinder."

"Ah 's me! Sergeant, it *has* been sad, as you say. That there has been treachery, and the position of the island has been betrayed, is now as sartain, in my judgment, as that we still hold the block. But——"

"Major Duncan was right," interrupted Dunham, laying a hand on the other's arm.

"Not in the sense you mean, Sergeant—no, not in that p'int of view; never! At least, not in my opinion. I know that natur' is weak—human natur' I mean—and that we should none of us vaunt of our gifts, whether red or white; but I do not think a truer-hearted lad lives on the lines than Jasper Western."

"Bless you! bless you for that! Pathfinder," burst forth from Mabel's very soul, while a flood of tears gave vent to emotions that were so varied while they were so violent. "Oh! bless you, Pathfinder, bless you! The brave

should never desert the brave—the honest should sustain the honest.”

The father's eyes were fastened anxiously on the face of his daughter, until the latter hid her countenance in her apron to conceal her tears; and then they turned with inquiry to the hard features of the guide. The latter merely wore their usual expression of frankness, sincerity, and uprightness; and the Sergeant motioned to him to proceed.

“You know the spot where the Sarpent and I left you, Sergeant,” Pathfinder resumed; “and I need say nothing of all that happened afore. It is now too late to regret what is gone and passed; but I do think if I had stayed with the boats this would not have come to pass. Other men may be as good guides—I make no doubt they are; but then natur' bestows its gifts, and some must be better than other some. I dare say poor Gilbert, who took my place, has suffered for his mistake.”

“He fell at my elbow,” the Sergeant answered, in a low melancholy tone. “We have, indeed, all suffered for our mistakes.”

“No, no, Sergeant, I meant no condemnation on you; for men were never better commanded than your’n, in this very expedition. I never beheld a prettier flanking; and the way in which you carried your own boat up ag’in their howitzer might have taught Lundie himself a lesson.”

The eyes of the Sergeant brightened, and his face even wore an expression of military triumph, though it was of a degree that suited the humble sphere in which he had been an actor.

“’Twas not badly done, my friend,” he said; “and we carried their log breast-work by storm.”

“’Twas nobly done, Sergeant; though, I fear, when all the truth comes to be known, it will be found that these vagabonds have got their howitzer back ag’in. Well, well, put a stout heart upon it, and try to forget all that is disagreeable, and to remember only the pleasant part of the matter. That is your truest philosophy; ay, and truest religion, too. If the inimy has got the howitzer ag’in, they’ve only got what belonged to them afore, and

what we couldn't help. They hav'n't got the blockhouse yet, nor are they likely to get it, unless they fire it in the dark. Well, Sergeant, the Sarpent and I separated about ten miles down the river ; for we thought it wisest not to come upon even a friendly camp without the usual caution. What has become of Chingachgook, I cannot say ; though Mabel tells me he is not far off, and I make no question the noble-hearted Delaware is doing his duty, although he is not now visible to our eyes. Mark my word, Sergeant, before this matter is over we shall hear of him at some critical time, and that in a discreet and creditable manner. Ah ! the Sarpent is indeed a wise and virtuous chief ; and any white man might covet his gifts, though his rifle is not quite as sure as killdeer, it must be owned. Well, as I came near the island I missed the smoke, and that put me on my guard ; for I knew that the men of the 55th were not cunning enough to conceal that sign, notwithstanding all that has been told them of its danger. This made me more careful, until I came in sight of this

mock-fisherman, as I've just told Mabel; and then the whole of their infernal arts was as plain before me as if I saw it on a map. I need not tell you, Sergeant, that my first thoughts were of Mabel; and that, finding she was in the block, I came here, in order to live or die in her company."

The father turned a gratified look upon his child; and Mabel felt a sinking of the heart that, at such a moment, she could not have thought possible, when she wished to believe all her concern centred in the situation of her parent. As the latter held out his hand, she took it in her own and kissed it. Then kneeling at his side, she wept as if her heart would break.

"Mabel," he said, steadily, "the will of God must be done. It is useless to attempt deceiving either you or myself: my time has come, and it is a consolation to me to die like a soldier. Lundie will do me justice; for our good friend Pathfinder will tell him what has been done, and how all came to pass. You do not forget our last conversation?"

“Nay, father, my time has probably come too,” exclaimed Mabel, who felt just then as if it would be a relief to die. “I cannot hope to escape; and Pathfinder would do well to leave us, and return to the garrison with the sad news, while he can.”

“Mabel Dunham,” said Pathfinder, reproachfully, though he took her hand with kindness, “I have not deserved this. I know I am wild, and uncouth, and ungainly—”

“Pathfinder!”

“Well, well, we’ll forget it; you did not mean it, you could not think it. It is useless, now, to talk of escaping, for the Sergeant cannot be moved; and the blockhouse must be defended, cost what it will. May be Lundie will get the tidings of our disaster, and send a party to raise the siege.”

“Pathfinder — Mabel!” said the Sergeant, who had been writhing with pain until the cold sweat stood on his forehead, “come both to my side. You understand each other, I hope?”

“Father, say nothing of that; it is all as you wish.”

“ Thank God ! Give me your hand, Mabel — here, Pathfinder, take it. I can do no more than give you the girl in this way. I know you will make her a kind husband. Do not wait on account of my death ; but there will be a chaplain in the fort before the season closes, and let him marry you at once. My brother, if living, will wish to go back to his vessel, and then the child will have no protector. Mabel, your husband will have been my friend, and that will be some consolation to you, I hope.”

“ Trust this matter to me, Sergeant,” put in Pathfinder ; “ leave it all in my hands, as your dying request ; and, depend on it, all will go as it should.”

“ I do, I do put all confidence in you, my trusty friend, and empower you to act, as I could act myself, in every particular. Mabel, child — hand me the water, — you will never repent this night. Bless you, my daughter ! God bless, and have you in his holy keeping !”

This tenderness was inexpressibly touching to one of Mabel’s feelings ; and she felt at that

moment, as if her future union with Pathfinder had received a solemnisation that no ceremony of the church could render more holy. Still, a weight, as that of a mountain, lay upon her heart, and she thought it would be happiness to die. Then followed a short pause, when the Sergeant, in broken sentences, briefly related what had passed, since he parted with Pathfinder and the Delaware. The wind had come more favourable ; and instead of encamping on an island, agreeably to the original intention, he had determined to continue, and reach the station that night. Their approach would have been unseen, and a portion of the calamity avoided, he thought, had they not grounded on the point of a neighbouring island, where, no doubt, the noise made by the men, in getting off the boat, gave notice of their approach, and enabled the enemy to be in readiness to receive them. They had landed without the slightest suspicion of danger, though surprised at not finding a sentinel, and had actually left their arms in the boat, with the intention of first securing their knapsacks and provisions. The

fire had been so close, that notwithstanding the obscurity, it was very deadly. Every man had fallen, though two or three subsequently arose, and disappeared. Four or five of the soldiers had been killed, or so nearly so, as to survive but a few minutes ; though, for some unknown reason, the enemy did not make the usual rush for the scalps. Sergeant Dunham fell with the others ; and he had heard the voice of Mabel, as she rushed from the blockhouse. This frantic appeal aroused all his parental feelings, and had enabled him to crawl as far as the door of the building, where he had raised himself against the logs, in the manner already mentioned.

After this simple explanation was made, the Sergeant was so weak as to need repose, and his companions, while they ministered to his wants, suffered some time to pass in silence. Pathfinder took the occasion to reconnoitre from the loops and the roof, and he examined the condition of the rifles, of which there were a dozen kept in the building, the soldiers having used their regimental muskets in the expedition.

But Mabel never left her father's side for an instant ; and when, by his breathing, she fancied he slept, she bent her knees and prayed.

The half hour that succeeded was awfully solemn and still. The moccasin of Pathfinder was barely heard over head, and occasionally the sound of the breech of a rifle fell upon the floor, for he was busied in examining the pieces, with a view to ascertain the state of their charges, and their primings. Beyond this nothing was so loud as the breathing of the wounded man. Mabel's heart yearned to be in communication with the father she was so soon to lose, and yet she would not disturb his apparent repose. But Dunham slept not ; he was in that state when the world suddenly loses its attractions, its illusions, and its power ; and the unknown future fills the mind with its conjectures, its revelations, and its immensity. He had been a moral man for one of his mode of life, but he had thought little of this all-important moment. Had the din of battle been ringing in his ears, his martial ardour might have endured to the end ; but there, in the

silence of that nearly untenanted blockhouse, with no sound to enliven him, no appeal to keep alive factitious sentiment, no hope of victory to impel, things began to appear in their true colours, and this state of being to be estimated at its just value. He would have given treasures for religious consolation, and yet he knew not where to turn to seek it. He thought of Pathfinder, but he distrusted his knowledge. He thought of Mabel, but for the parent to appeal to the child for such succour, appeared like reversing the order of nature. Then it was that he felt the full responsibility of the parental character, and had some clear glimpses of the manner in which he himself had discharged the trust towards an orphan child. While thoughts like these were rising in his mind, Mabel, who watched the slightest change in his breathing, heard a guarded knock at the door. Supposing it might be Chingachgook, she rose, undid two of the bars, and held the third in her hand, as she asked who was there. The answer was in her uncle's voice, and he implored her to give him instant admission. Without an instant of

hesitation, she turned the bar, and Cap entered. He had barely passed the opening, when Mabel closed the door again, and secured it as before, for practice had rendered her expert in this portion of her duties.

The sturdy seaman, when he had made sure of the state of his brother-in-law, and that Mabel, as well as himself, was safe, was softened nearly to tears. His own appearance he explained, by saying that he had been carelessly guarded, under the impression that he and the Quarter-master were sleeping under the fumes of liquor with which they had been plied with a view to keep them quiet in the expected engagement. Muir had been left asleep, or seeming to sleep; but Cap had run into the bushes, on the alarm of the attack, and having found Pathfinder's canoe, had only succeeded, at that moment, in getting to the blockhouse, whither he had come with the kind intent of escaping with his niece by water. It is scarcely necessary to say, that he changed his plan, when he ascertained the state of the Sergeant, and the apparent security of his present quarters.

“ If the worst comes to the worst, Master Pathfinder,” he said, “ we must strike, and that will entitle us to receive quarter. We owe it to our manhood to hold out a reasonable time, and to ourselves to haul down the ensign in season to make saving conditions. I wished Master Muir to do the same thing, when we were captured by these chaps you call vagabonds, — and rightly are they named, for viler vagabonds do not walk the earth —”

“ You ’ve found out their characters?” interrupted Pathfinder, who was always as ready to chime in with abuse of the Mingos, as with the praises of his friends. “ Now, had you fallen into the hands of the Delawares, you would have learned the difference.”

“ Well, to me, they seem much of a muchness ; blackguards fore and aft, always excepting our friend the Serpent, who is a gentleman, for an Indian. But, when these savages made the assault on us, killing Corporal McNab and his men, as if they had been so many rabbits, Lieutenant Muir and myself took refuge in one of the holes of this here island, of which there

are so many among the rocks — regular geological underground burrows made by the water, as the lieutenant says, — and there we remained stowed away like two leaguers in a ship's hold, until we gave out for want of grub. A man may say that grub is the foundation of human nature. I desired the Quarter-master to make terms, for we could have defended ourselves for an hour or two in the place, bad as it was ; but he declined, on the ground that the knaves wouldn't keep faith, if any of them were hurt, and so there was no use in asking them to. I consented to strike, on two principles ; one, that we might be said to have struck already, for running below is generally thought to be giving up the ship ; and the other that we had an enemy in our stomachs that was more formidable in his attacks, than the enemy on deck. Hunger is a d—ble circumstance, as any man who has lived on it eight-and-forty hours will acknowledge."

" Uncle ! " said Mabel, in a mournful voice and with an expostulatory manner, " my poor father is sadly, sadly hurt ! "

“ True, Magnet, true ; I will sit by him, and do my best at consolation. Are the bars well fastened, girl ? for, on such an occasion, the mind should be tranquil and undisturbed.”

“ We are safe, I believe, from all but this heavy blow of Providence.”

“ Well, then, Magnet, do you go up to the floor above, and try to compose yourself, while Pathfinder runs aloft and takes a look-out from the cross-trees. Your father may wish to say something to me in private, and it may be well to leave us alone. These are solemn scenes, and inexperienced people, like myself, do not always wish what they say to be overheard.”

Although the idea of her uncle's affording religious consolation by the side of a death-bed certainly never obtruded itself on the imagination of Mabel, she thought there might be a propriety in the request, with which she was unacquainted, and she complied accordingly. Pathfinder had already ascended to the roof to make his survey, and the brothers-in-law were left alone. Cap took a seat by

the side of the Sergeant, and bethought him, seriously, of the grave duty he had before him. A silence of several minutes succeeded, during which brief space, the mariner was digesting the substance of his intended discourse.

“I must say, Sergeant Dunham,” Cap at length commenced, in his peculiar manner, “that there has been mismanagement somewhere in this unhappy expedition; and, the present being an occasion when truth ought to be spoken, and nothing but the truth, I feel it my duty to say as much, in plain language. In short, Sergeant, on this point there cannot well be two opinions; for, seaman as I am, and no soldier, I can see several errors myself, that it needs no great education to detect.”

“What would you have, brother Cap?” returned the other, in a feeble voice; “what is done, is done; and it is now too late to remedy it.”

“Very true, brother Dunham, but not to repent of it; the Good Book tells us, it is never

too late to repent ; and I've always heard that this is the precious moment. If you've anything on your mind, Sergeant, hoist it out freely ; for, you know, you trust it to a friend. You were my own sister's husband, and poor little Magnet is my own sister's daughter ; and, living or dead, I shall always look upon you as a brother. It's a thousand pities that you didn't lie off and on, with the boats, and send a canoe a-head, to reconnoitre ; in which case your command would have been saved, and this disaster would not have befallen us all. Well, Sergeant, we are *all* mortal ; that is some consolation, I make no doubt ; and if you go before, a little, why, we must follow. Yes, that *must* give you consolation."

" I know all this, brother Cap ; and hope I'm prepared to meet a soldier's fate—there is poor Mabel—"

" Ay, ay, that's a heavy drag, I know ; but you wouldn't take her with you, if you could, Sergeant ; and so the better way is to make as light of the separation as you can.

Mabel is a good girl, and so was her mother before her ; she was my sister, and it shall be my care to see that her daughter gets a good husband, if our lives and scalps are spared ; for I suppose no one would care about entering into a family that has no scalps."

" Brother, my child is betrothed ; she will become the wife of Pathfinder."

" Well, brother Dunham, every man has his opinions, and his manner of viewing things ; and, to my notion, this match will be anything but agreeable to Mabel. I have no objection to the age of the man ; I'm not one of them that thinks it necessary to be a boy to make a girl happy, but on the whole, I prefer a man of about fifty, for a husband ; still, there ought not to be any circumstance between the parties to make them unhappy. Circumstances play the devil with matrimony ; and I set it down as one, that Pathfinder don't know as much as my niece. You've seen but little of the girl, Sergeant, and have not got the run of her knowledge ; but, let her pay it out freely, as she will do, when she gets

to be thoroughly acquainted, and you'll fall in with but few schoolmasters that can keep their luffs in her company."

"She's a good child—a dear, good child," muttered the Sergeant, his eyes filling with tears; "and it is my misfortune that I have seen so little of her."

"She is, indeed, a good girl, and knows altogether too much for poor Pathfinder, who is a reasonable man, and an experienced man; in his own way; but who has no more idea of the main chance, than you have of spherical trigonometry, Sergeant."

"Ah! brother Cap, had Pathfinder been with us in the boats, this sad affair might not have happened."

"That is quite likely; for his worst enemy will allow that the man is a good guide: but then, Sergeant, if the truth must be spoken, you have managed this expedition in a loose way altogether. You should have hove-to off your haven, and sent in a boat to reconnoitre, as I told you before. That is a matter to be repented of; and I tell it to you,

because truth, in such a case, ought to be spoken."

"My errors are dearly paid for, brother; and poor Mabel, I fear, will be the sufferer. I think, however, that the calamity would not have happened had there not been treason. I fear me, brother, that Jasper Eau-douce has played us false."

"That is just my notion; for this fresh-water life must, sooner or later, undermine any man's morals. Lieutenant Muir and myself talked this matter over while we lay in a bit of a hole out here, on this island; and we both came to the conclusion, that nothing short of Jasper's treachery could have brought us all into this infernal scrape. Well, Sergeant, you had better compose your mind, and think of other matters; for, when a vessel is about to enter a strange port, it is more prudent to think of the anchorage inside, than to be under-running all the events that have turned up during the v'y'ge. There's the log-book expressly to note all these matters in; and what stands there must form the column of figures

that 's to be posted up for or against us. How now, Pathfinder! is there anything in the wind that you come down the ladder, like an Indian in the wake of a scalp?"

The guide raised a finger for silence, and then beckoned to Cap to ascend the first ladder, and to allow Mabel to take his place at the side of the Sergeant.

"We must be prudent, and we must be bold, too," he said, in a low voice. "The riptyles are in earnest in their intention to fire the block; for they know there is now nothing to be gained by letting it stand. I hear the voice of that vagabond, Arrowhead, among them, and he is urging them to set about their devilry this very night. We must be stirring, Salt-water, and doing too. Luckily, there are four or five barrels of water in the block, and these are something towards a siege. My reckoning is wrong, too, or we shall yet reap some advantage from that honest fellow's, the Sarpent, being at liberty."

Cap did not wait for a second invitation; but, stealing away, he was soon in the upper

room with Pathfinder, while Mabel took his post at the side of her father's humble bed. Pathfinder had opened a loop, having so far concealed the light that it would not expose him to a treacherous shot; and, expecting a summons, he stood with his face near the hole, ready to answer. The stillness that succeeded was at length broken by the voice of Muir.

“Master Pathfinder,” called out the Scotchman, “a friend summons you to a parley. Come freely to one of the loops; for you’ve nothing to fear so long as you are in converse with an officer of the 55th.”

“What is your will? Quarter-master; what is your will? I know the 55th, and believe it to be a brave regiment; though I rather incline to the 60th as my favourite, and to the Delawares more than to either: but what would you have, Quarter-master? It must be a pressing errand that brings you under the loops of a blockhouse, at this hour of the night, with the sartainty of killdeer being inside of it.”

“Oh! you’ll no harm a friend, Pathfinder, I’m certain; and that’s my security. You’re

a man of judgment, and have gained too great a name on this frontier for bravery to feel the necessity of foolhardiness to obtain a character. You'll very well understand, my good friend, there is as much credit to be gained by submitting gracefully, when resistance becomes impossible, as by obstinately holding out contrary to the rules of war. The enemy is too strong for us, my brave comrade, and I come to counsel you to give up the block, on condition of being treated as a prisoner of war."

"I thank you for this advice, Quarter-master, which is the more acceptable, as it costs nothing; but I do not think it belongs to my gifts to yield a place like this, while food and water last."

"Well, I'd be the last, Pathfinder, to recommend anything against so brave a resolution, did I see the means of maintaining it. But ye'll remember that Master Cap has fallen."

"Not he, not he," roared the individual in question through another loop, "so far from that, Lieutenant, he has risen to the height of

this here fortification, and has no mind to put his head of hair into the hands of such barbers, again, so long as he can help it. I look upon this blockhouse as a circumstance, and have no mind to throw it away."

"If that is a living voice," returned Muir, "I am glad to hear it; for we all thought the man had fallen in the late fearful confusion. But Master Pathfinder, although ye're enjoying the society of your friend Cap, and a great pleasure do I know it to be, by the experience of two days and a night passed in a hole in the earth, we've lost that of Sergeant Dunham, who has fallen, with all the brave men he led in the late expedition. Lundie would have it so, though it would have been more discreet and becoming to send a commissioned officer in command. Dunham was a brave man, notwithstanding, and shall have justice done his memory. In short, we have all acted for the best, and that is as much as could be said in favour of Prince Eugene, the Duke of Marlborough, or the great Earl of Stair himself.

"You're wrong ag'in, Quarter-master,

you 're wrong ag'in," answered Pathfinder, resorting to a ruse to magnify his force. "The Sargeant is safe in the block too, where one might say the whole family is collected."

"Well, I rejoice to hear it, for we had certainly counted the Sargeant among the slain. If pretty Mabel is in the block still, let her not delay an instant, for Heaven's sake, in quitting it, for the enemy is about to put it to the trial by fire. Ye know the potency of that dread element, and will be acting more like the discreet and experienced warrior ye 're universally allowed to be, in yielding a place you canna' defend, than in drawing down ruin on yourself and companions."

"I know the potency of fire, as you call it, Quarter-master; and am not to be told, at this late hour, that it can be used for something else besides cooking a dinner. But I make no doubt you 've heard of the potency of kildeer, and the man who attempts to lay a pile of brush against these logs, will get a taste of his power. As for arrows, it is not in their gift to set this building on fire, for

we've no shingles on our roof, but good solid logs and green bark, and plenty of water besides. The roof is so flat, too, as you know yourself, Quarter-master, that we can walk on it, and so no danger on that score while water lasts. I'm peaceable enough if let alone; but he who endivours to burn this block over my head, will find the fire squinched in his own blood."

"This is idle and romantic talk, Pathfinder; and ye'll no maintain it yourself when ye come to meditate on the realities. I hope ye'll no gainsay the loyalty or the courage of the 55th, and I feel convinced that a council of war would decide on the propriety of a surrender forthwith. Na', na', Pathfinder, foolhardiness is na' mair like the bravery o' Wallace or Bruce, than Albany on the Hudson is like the old town of Edinbro'."

"As each of us seems to have made up his mind, Quarter-master, more words are useless. If the riptyles near you are disposed to set about their hellish job, let them begin at once. They can burn wood, and I'll burn powder.

If I were an Indian at the stake, I suppose I could brag as well as the rest of them ; but my gifts and natur' being both white, my turn is rather for doing than talking. You 've said quite enough, considering you carry the King's commission ; and should we all be consumed, none of us will bear *you* any malice."

" Pathfinder, ye 'll no be exposing Mabel, pretty Mabel Dunham, to sic' a calamity ! "

" Mabel Dunhan is by the side of her wounded father, and God will care for the safety of a pious child. Not a hair of her head shall fall, while my arm and sight remain true ; and though *you* may trust the Mingos, Master Muir, I put no faith in them. You 've a knavish Tuscarora in your company there, who has art and malice enough to spoil the character of any tribe with which he consorts, though he found the Mingos ready ruined to his hands, I fear. But enough said ; now let each party go to the use of his means and his gifts."

Throughout this dialogue Pathfinder had kept his body covered, lest a treacherous shot

should be aimed at the loop; and he now directed Cap to ascend to the roof in order to be in readiness to meet the first assault. Although the latter used sufficient diligence, he found no less than ten blazing arrows sticking to the bark, while the air was filled with the yells and whoops of the enemy. A rapid discharge of rifles followed, and the bullets came pattering against the logs, in a way to show that the struggle had indeed seriously commenced.

These were sounds, however, that appalled neither Pathfinder nor Cap, while Mabel was too much absorbed in her affliction to feel alarm. She had good sense enough, too, to understand the nature of the defences, and fully to appreciate their importance. As for her father, the familiar noises revived him; and it pained his child, at such a moment, to see that his glassy eye began to kindle, and that the blood returned to a cheek it had deserted, as he listened to the uproar. It was now Mabel first perceived that his reason began slightly to wander.

“Order up the light companies,” he muttered, “and let the grenadiers charge! Do they dare to attack us in our fort? Why does not the artillery open on them?”

At that instant the heavy report of a gun burst on the night; and the crashing of rending wood was heard, as a heavy shot tore the logs in the room above, and the whole block shook with the force of a shell that lodged in the work. The Pathfinder narrowly escaped the passage of this formidable missile as it entered; but when it exploded, Mabel could not suppress a shriek; for she supposed all over her head, whether animate or inanimate, destroyed. To increase her horror, her father shouted, in a frantic voice, to “charge!”

“Mabel,” said Pathfinder, with his head at the trap, “this is true Mingo work—more noise than injury. The vagabonds have got the howitzer we took from the French, and have discharged it ag’in the block; but, fortunately, they have fired off the only shell we had, and there is an ind of its use, for the present. There is some confusion among the stores up

in this loft, but no one is hurt. Your uncle is still on the roof; and as for myself, I've run the gauntlet of too many rifles to be skeary about such a thing as a howitzer, and that in Indian hands."

Mabel murmured her thanks, and tried to give all her attention to her father; whose efforts to rise were only counteracted by his debility. During the fearful minutes that succeeded, she was so much occupied with the care of the invalid, that she scarcely heeded the clamour that reigned around her. Indeed, the uproar was so great, that, had not her thoughts been otherwise employed, confusion of faculties, rather than alarm, would probably have been the consequence.

Cap preserved his coolness admirably. He had a profound and increasing respect for the power of the savages, and even for the majesty of fresh-water, it is true; but his apprehensions of the former proceeded more from his dread of being scalped and tortured, than from any unmanly fear of death; and, as he was now on the deck of a house, if not on the

deck of a ship, and knew that there was little danger of boarders, he moved about with a fearlessness, and a rash exposure of his person, that Pathfinder, had he been aware of the fact, would have been the first to condemn. Instead of keeping his body covered, agreeably to the usages of Indian warfare, he was seen on every part of the roof, dashing the water right and left, with the apparent steadiness and unconcern he would have manifested had he been a sail-trimmer, exercising his art in a battle afloat. His appearance was one of the causes of the extraordinary clamour among the assailants; who, unused to see their enemies so reckless, opened upon him with their tongues, like a pack that has the fox in view. Still he appeared to possess a charmed life; for though the bullets whistled around him on every side, and his clothes were several times torn, nothing cut his skin. When the shell passed through the logs below, the old sailor dropped his bucket, waved his hat, and gave three cheers; in which heroic act he was employed as the dangerous missile exploded.

This characteristic feat probably saved his life; for, from that instant, the Indians ceased to fire at him, and even to shoot their flaming arrows at the block, having taken up the notion simultaneously, and by common consent, that the "Salt-water" was mad; and it was a singular effect of their magnanimity, never to lift a hand against those whom they imagined devoid of reason.

The conduct of Pathfinder was very different. Everything he did was regulated by the most exact calculation, the result of long experience, and habitual thoughtfulness. His person was kept carefully out of a line with the loops, and the spot that he selected for his look-out was one that was quite removed from danger. This celebrated guide had often been known to lead forlorn hopes; he had once stood at the stake, suffering under the cruelties and taunts of savage ingenuity, and savage ferocity, without quailing; and legends of his exploits, coolness, and daring, were to be heard all along that extensive frontier, or wherever men dwelt, and men contended. But, on

this occasion, one who did not know his history and character, might have thought his exceeding care, and studied attention to self-preservation, proceeded from an unworthy motive. But such a judge would not have understood his subject: the Pathfinder bethought him of Mabel, and of what might possibly be the consequences to that poor girl, should any casualty befall himself. But the recollection rather quickened his intellect, than changed his customary prudence. He was, in fact, one of those who was so unaccustomed to fear, that he never bethought him of the constructions others might put upon his conduct. But while, in moments of danger, he acted with the wisdom of the serpent, it was also with the simplicity of a child.

For the first ten minutes of the assault, Pathfinder never raised the breech of his rifle from the floor, except when he changed his own position, for he well knew that the bullets of the enemy were thrown away upon the massive logs of the work; and, as he had been at the capture of the howitzer, he felt certain

that the savages had no other shell than the one found in it when the piece was taken. There existed no reason, therefore, to dread the fire of the assailants, except as a casual bullet might find a passage through a loop-hole. One or two of these accidents did occur, but the balls entered at an angle that deprived them of all chance of doing any injury, so long as the Indians kept near the block; and, if discharged from a distance, there was scarcely the possibility of one in a hundred's striking the apertures. But, when Pathfinder heard the sound of moccasined feet, and the rustling of brush at the foot of the building, he knew that the attempt to build a fire against the logs was about to be renewed. He now summoned Cap from the roof, where, indeed, all the danger had ceased, and directed him to stand in readiness with his water, at a hole immediately over the spot assailed.

One less trained than our hero, would have been in a hurry to repel this dangerous attempt also, and might have resorted to his means prematurely; not so with Pathfinder.

His aim was not only to extinguish the fire, about which he felt little apprehension, but to give the enemy a lesson that would render him wary during the remainder of the night. In order to effect the latter purpose, it became necessary to wait until the light of the intended conflagration should direct his aim, when he well knew that a very slight effort of his skill would suffice. The Iroquois were permitted to collect their heap of dried brush, to pile it against the block, to light it, and to return to their covers, without molestation. All that Pathfinder would suffer Cap to do, was to roll a barrel filled with water to the hole immediately over the spot, in readiness to be used at the proper instant. That moment, however, did not arrive, in his judgment, until the blaze illuminated the surrounding bushes, and there had been time for his quick and practised eye to detect the forms of three or four lurking savages, who were watching the progress of the flames, with the cool indifference of men accustomed to look on human misery with apathy. Then, indeed, he spoke.

“Are you ready, friend Cap?” he asked. “The heat begins to strike through the crevices; and, although these green logs are not of the fiery natur’ of an ill-tempered man, they may be kindled into a blaze, if one provokes them too much. Are you ready with the barrel? See that it has the right cut, and that none of the water is wasted.”

“All ready!” answered Cap, in the manner in which a seaman replies to such a demand.

“Then wait for the word. Never be over-impatient in a critical time, nor fool-risky in a battle. Wait for the word.”

While the Pathfinder was giving these directions, he was also making his own preparations; for he saw it was time to act. Killdeer was deliberately raised, pointed, and discharged. The whole process occupied about half a minute, and, as the rifle was drawn in, the eye of the marksman was applied to the hole.

“There is one riptyle the less,” Pathfinder muttered to himself: “I’ve seen that vagabond afore, and know him to be a mar-

ciless devil. Well, well ! the man acted according to his gifts, and he has been rewarded according to his gifts. One more of the knaves, and that will sarve the turn for to-night. When daylight appears, we may have hotter work."

All this time another rifle was getting ready; and as Pathfinder ceased, a second savage fell. This indeed sufficed ; for, indisposed to wait for a third visitation from the same hand, the whole band, which had been crouching in the bushes around the block, ignorant of who was and who was not exposed to view, leaped from their covers, and fled to different places for safety.

"Now, pour away, Master Cap," said Pathfinder: "I've made my mark on the blackguards; and we shall have no more fires lighted to-night."

"Scaldings !" cried Cap, upsetting the barrel, with a care that at once and completely extinguished the flames.

This ended the singular conflict ; and the remainder of the night passed in peace. Path-

finder and Cap watched alternately, though neither can be said to have slept. Sleep indeed scarcely seemed necessary to them, for both were accustomed to protracted watchings; and there were seasons and times when the former appeared to be literally insensible to the demands of hunger and thirst, and callous to the effects of fatigue.

Mabel watched by her father's pallet, and began to feel how much our happiness in this world depends even on things that are imaginary. Hitherto she had virtually lived without a father, the connection with her remaining parent being ideal rather than positive; but now that she was about to lose him, she thought for the moment that the world would be a void after his death, and that she could never be acquainted with happiness again.

CHAPTER VI.

There was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily, and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods.

WORDSWORTH.

As the light returned, Pathfinder and Cap ascended again to the roof, with a view to reconnoitre the state of things once more on the island. This part of the blockhouse had a low battlement around it, which afforded a considerable protection to those who stood in its centre; the intention having been to enable marksmen to lie behind it, and to fire over its top. By making proper use therefore of these slight defences—slight as to height, though abundantly ample as far as they went—the two look-outs commanded a pretty good view of

the island, its covers excepted, and of most of the channels that led to the spot.

The gale was still blowing very fresh at south; and there were places in the river where its surface looked green and angry, though the wind had hardly sweep enough to raise the water into foam. The shape of the little island was nearly oval, and its greater length was from east to west. By keeping in the channels that washed it, in consequence of their several courses and of the direction of the gale, it would have been possible for a vessel to range past the island, on either of its principal sides, and always to keep the wind very nearly abeam. These were the facts first noticed by Cap, and explained to his companion; for the hopes of both now rested on the chances of relief sent from Oswego. At this instant, while they stood gazing anxiously about them, Cap cried out in his lusty hearty manner—

“Sail, ho!”

Pathfinder turned quickly in the direction of his companion's face; and there, sure

enough, was just visible the object of the old sailor's exclamation. The elevation enabled the two to overlook the low land of several of the adjacent islands; and the canvas of a vessel was seen through the bushes that fringed the shore of one that lay to the southward and westward. The stranger was under what seamen call low sail; but so great was the power of the wind, that her white outlines were seen flying past the openings of the verdure with the velocity of a fast-travelling horse—resembling a cloud driving in the heavens.

“That cannot be, Jasper,” said Pathfinder, in disappointment; for he did not recognise the cutter of his friend, in the swift-passing object. “No, no, the lad is behind the hour; and that is some craft that the Frenchers have sent to aid their friends, the accursed Mingos.”

“This time you are out in your reckoning, friend Pathfinder, if you never were before,” returned Cap, in a manner that had lost none of its dogmatism by the critical circumstances in which they were placed. “Fresh water, or salt, that is the head of the Scud's mainsail,

for it is cut with a smaller goar than common ; and then you can see that the gaff has been fished—quite neatly done, I admit, but fished.”

“ I can see none of this, I confess,” answered Pathfinder, to whom even the terms of his companion were Greek.

“ No ! Well, I own that surprises me, for I thought *your* eyes could see anything ! Now, to me, nothing is plainer than that goar and that fish ; and, I must say, my honest friend, that, in your place, I should apprehend that my sight was beginning to fail.”

“ If Jasper is truly coming, I shall apprehend but little. We can make good the block against the whole Mingo nation for the next eight or ten hours ; and, with Eau-douce to cover the retreat, I shall despair of nothing. God send that the lad may not run alongside of the bank, and fall into an ambushment, as befell the Sergeant !”

“ Ay, there’s the danger. There ought to have been signals concerted, and an anchorage-ground buoyed out, and even a quarantine station, or a lazaretto, would have been useful,

could we have made these Minks-ho respect the laws. If the lad fetches up, as you say, anywhere in the neighbourhood of this island, we may look upon the cutter as lost. And, after all, Master Pathfinder, ought we not to set down this same Jasper as a secret ally of the French, rather than as a friend of our own. I know the Sergeant views the matter in that light; and, I must say, this whole affair looks like treason."

"We shall soon know, we shall soon know, Master Cap; for there, indeed, comes the cutter, clear of the other island, and five minutes must settle the matter. It would be no more than fair, however, if we could give the boy some sign, in the way of warning. It is not right that he should fall into the trap, without a notice that it has been laid."

Anxiety and suspense, notwithstanding, prevented either from attempting to make any signal. It was not easy, truly, to see how it could be done; for the Scud came foaming through the channel, on the weather side of the island, at a rate that scarcely admitted of

the necessary time. Nor was any one visible on her deck to make signs to; even her helm seemed deserted, though her course was as steady, as her progress was rapid.

Cap stood in silent admiration of a spectacle so unusual. But, as the Scud drew nearer, his practised eye detected the helm in play, by means of tiller-ropes, though the person who steered was concealed. As the cutter had weather-boards of some little height, the mystery was explained, no doubt remaining that her people lay behind the latter, in order to be protected from the rifles of the enemy. As this fact showed that no force, beyond that of the small crew, could be on board, Pathfinder received his companion's explanation with an ominous shake of the head.

“This proves that the Sarpent has not reached Oswego,” he said, “and that we are not to expect succour from the garrison. I hope Lundie has not taken it into his head to displace the lad, for Jasper Western would be a host of himself, in such a strait. We three, Master Cap, ought to make a manful warfare ;

you, as a seaman, to keep up the intercourse with the cutter; Jasper, as a laker who knows all that is necessary to be done on the water; and I, with gifts that are as good as any among the Mingos, let me be what I may, in other particulars. I say, we ought to make a manful fight in Mabel's behalf."

"That we ought, and that we will," answered Cap, heartily; for he began to have more confidence in the security of his scalp, now that he saw the sun again. "I set down the arrival of the Scud as one circumstance, and the chances of Oh-deuce's honesty as another. This Jasper is a young man of prudence, you find; for he keeps a good offing, and seems determined to know how matters stand on the island, before he ventures to bring up."

"I have it! I have it!" exclaimed Pathfinder with exultation. "There lies the canoe of the Sarpent, on the cutter's deck; and the chief has got on board, and no doubt has given a true account of our condition; for, unlike a Mingo, a Delaware is sartain to get a story right, or to hold his tongue."

Pathfinder's disposition to think well of the Delawares, and to think ill of the Mingos, must by this time be very apparent to the reader. Of the veracity of the former he entertained the highest respect, while of the latter he thought, as the more observant and intelligent classes of this country are getting pretty generally to think of certain scribblers among ourselves, who are known to have been so long in the habits of mendacity, that it is thought they can no longer tell the truth, even when they seriously make the effort.

"That canoe may not belong to the cutter," said the captious seaman. "Oh-Deuce had one on board when we sailed."

"Very true, friend Cap; but, if you know your sails and masts, by your goars and fishes, I know my canoes and my paths, by frontier knowledge. If you can see new cloth in a sail, I can see new bark in a canoe. That is the boat of the Sarpent, and the noble fellow has struck off for the garrison as soon as he found the block besieged, has fallen in with the Scud, and, after telling his story, has

brought the cutter down here to see what can be done. The Lord grant that Jasper Western be still on board her !”

“ Yes, yes ; it might not be amiss ; for, traitor or loyal, the lad has a handy way with him, in a gale, it must be owned.”

“ And in coming over water-falls !” said Pathfinder, nudging the ribs of his companion with an elbow, and laughing in his silent but hearty manner. “ We will give the boy his due, though he scalps us all with his own hand.”

The Scud was now so near, that Cap made no reply. The scene, just at that instant, was so peculiar, that it merits a particular description ; which may also aid the reader in forming a more accurate nature of the picture we wish to draw.

The gale was still blowing violently. Many of the smaller trees bowed their tops, as if ready to descend to the earth, while the rushing of the wind through the branches of the groves resembled the roar of distant chariots.

The air was filled with leaves, which, at that

late season, were readily driven from their stems, and flew from island to island like flights of birds. With this exception, the spot seemed silent as the grave. That the savages still remained, was to be inferred from the fact that their canoes, together with the boats of the 55th, lay in a group in the little cove that had been selected as a harbour. Otherwise, not a sign of their presence was to be detected. Though taken entirely by surprise by the cutter, the sudden return of which was altogether unlooked-for, so uniform and inbred were their habits of caution while on the war-path, that the instant an alarm was given every man had taken to his cover with the instinct and cunning of a fox seeking his hole. The same stillness reigned in the blockhouse ; for though Pathfinder and Cap could command a view of the channel, they took the precaution necessary to lie concealed. The unusual absence of anything like animal life on board the Scud, too, was still more remarkable. As the Indians witnessed her apparently undirected movements, a feeling of awe gained a

footing among them, and some of the boldest of their party began to distrust the issue of an expedition that had commenced so prosperously. Even Arrowhead, accustomed as he was to intercourse with the whites on both sides of the lakes, fancied there was something ominous in the appearance of this unmanned vessel, and he would gladly at that moment have been landed again on the main.

In the mean time the progress of the cutter was steady and rapid. She held her way mid-channel, now inclining to the gusts, and now rising again, like the philosopher that bends to the calamities of life to resume his erect attitude as they pass away, but always piling the water beneath her bows, in foam. Although she was under so very short canvas, her velocity was great, and there could not have elapsed ten minutes between the time when her sails were first seen glancing past the trees and bushes in the distance, and the moment when she was abreast of the blockhouse. Cap and Pathfinder leaned forward, as the cutter came beneath their eyrie, eager to get a better

view of her deck, when to the delight of both, Jasper Eau-douce sprang upon his feet, and gave three hearty cheers. Regardless of all risk, Cap leaped upon the rampart of logs, and returned the greeting, cheer for cheer. Happily, the policy of the enemy saved the latter ; for they still lay quiet, not a rifle being discharged. On the other hand, Pathfinder kept in view the useful, utterly disregarding the mere dramatic, part of warfare. The moment he beheld his friend Jasper he called out to him with Stentorian lungs —

“ Stand by us, lad, and the day ’s our own ! Give ’em a grist in yonder bushes, and you ’ll put ’em up like partridges.”

Part of this reached Jasper’s ears, but most was borne off to leeward, on the wings of the wind. By the time this was said the Scud had driven past, and in the next moment she was hid from view, by the grove in which the blockhouse was partially concealed.

Two anxious minutes succeeded ; but, at the expiration of that brief space, the sails were again gleaming through the trees, Jasper hav-

ing wore, jibbed, and hauled up under the lee of the island, on the other tack. The wind was free enough, as has been already explained, to admit of this manœuvre, and the cutter catching the current under her lee bow, was breasted up to her course in a way that showed she would come out to windward of the island again, without any difficulty. This whole evolution was made with the greatest facility, not a sheet being touched, the sails trimming themselves, the rudder alone controlling the admirable machine. The object appeared to be a reconnoissance. When, however, the Scud had made the circuit of the entire island, and had again got her weatherly position, in the channel by which she had first approached, her helm was put down, and she tacked. The noise of the mainsail flapping when it filled, close-reefed as it was, sounded like the report of a gun, and Cap trembled lest the seams should open.

“His Majesty gives good canvas, it must be owned,” muttered the old seaman; “and it must be owned, too, that boy handles his

boat as if he were thoroughly bred ! D—me, Master Pathfinder, if I believe, after all that has been reported in the matter, that this Mister Oh-Deuce got his trade on this bit of fresh water.”

“ He did ; yes he did. He never saw the ocean, and has come by his calling altogether up here on Ontario. I have often thought he has a nat’ral gift, in the way of schooners and sloops, and have respected him accordingly. As for treason, and lying, and black-hearted vices, friend Cap, Jasper Western is as free as the most virtuous of the Delaware warriors ; and if you crave to see a truly honest man, you must go among that tribe to discover him.”

“ There he comes round ! ” exclaimed the delighted Cap, the Scud at this moment filling on her original tack, “ and now we shall see what the boy would be at ; he cannot mean to keep running up and down these passages, like a girl footing it through a country-dance.”

The Scud now kept so much away that,

for a moment, the two observers on the block-house feared Jasper meant to come-to; and the savages, in their lairs, gleamed out upon her with the sort of exultation that the crouching tiger may be supposed to feel, as he sees his unconscious victim approach his bed. But Jasper had no such intention: familiar with the shore, and acquainted with the depth of water on every part of the island, he well knew that the Scud might be run against the bank with impunity, and he ventured fearlessly so near, that as he passed through the little cove, he swept the two boats of the soldiers from their fastenings, and forced them out into the channel, towing them with the cutter. As all the canoes were fastened to the two Dunham boats, by this bold and successful attempt, the savages were at once deprived of the means of quitting the island, unless by swimming, and they appeared to be instantly aware of the very important fact. Rising in a body, they filled the air with yells, and poured in a harmless fire. While up in this unguarded manner two rifles were discharged by their

adversaries. One came from the summit of the block, and an Iroquois fell dead in his tracks, shot through the brain. The other came from the Scud. The last was the piece of the Delaware, but, less true than that of his friend, it only maimed an enemy for life. The people of the Scud shouted, and the savages sunk again, to a man, as if it might be into the earth.

“That was the Sarpent’s voice,” said Pathfinder, as soon as the second piece was discharged. “I know the crack of his rifle as well as I do that of killdeer. ’Tis a good barrel, though not sartain death. Well, well, with Chingachgook and Jasper on the water, and you and I in the block, friend Cap, it will be hard if we don’t teach these Mingo scamps the rationality of a fight.”

All this time, the Scud was in motion. As soon she had reached the end of the island, Jasper sent his prizes adrift; and they went down before the wind, until they stranded on a point half a mile to leeward. He then wore, and came stemming the current again,

through the other passage. Those on the summit of the block could now perceive that something was in agitation on the deck of the Scud; and, to their great delight, just as the cutter came abreast of the principal cove, on the spot where most of the enemy lay, the howitzer, which composed her sole armament, was unmasked, and a shower of case-shot was sent hissing into the bushes. A bevy of quail would not have risen quicker than this unexpected discharge of iron hail put up the Iroquois; when a second savage fell by a messenger sent from kildeer, and another went limping away, by a visit from the rifle of Chingachgook. New covers were immediately found, however; and each party seemed to prepare for the renewal of the strife in another form. But the appearance of June, bearing a white flag, and accompanied by the French officer and Muir, stayed the hands of all, and was the forerunner of another parley.

The negotiation that followed was held beneath the blockhouse; and so near it, as at once to put those who were uncovered com-

pletely at the mercy of Pathfinder's unerring aim. Jasper anchored directly a-beam ; and the howitzer, too, was kept trained upon the negotiators : so that the besieged and their friends, with the exception of the man who held the match, had no hesitation about exposing their persons. Chingachgook alone lay in ambush ; more, however, from habit than distrust.

“ You ’ve triumphed, Pathfinder,” called out the Quarter-master, “ and Captain Sanguier has come himself to offer terms. You ’ll no be denying a brave enemy an honourable retreat, when he has fought ye fairly, and done all the credit he could to king and country. Ye are too loyal a subject, yourself, to visit loyalty and fidelity with a heavy judgment. I am authorized to offer, on the part of the enemy, an evacuation of the island, a mutual exchange of prisoners, and a restoration of scalps. In the absence of baggage and artillery, little more can be done.”

As the conversation was necessarily carried on in a high key, both on account of the

wind, and on account of the distance, all that was said was heard equally by those in the block, and those in the cutter.

“What do you say to that, Jasper?” called out Pathfinder. “You hear the proposal: shall we let the vagabonds go? or shall we mark them, as they mark their sheep in the settlements, that we may know them again?”

“What has befallen Mabel Dunham?” demanded the young man, with a frown on his handsome face, that was visible even to those in the block. “If a hair of her head has been touched, it will go hard with the whole Iroquois tribe.”

“Nay, nay, she is safe below, nursing a dying parent, as becomes her sex. We owe no grudge on account of the Sergeant’s hurt, which comes of lawful warfare; and as for Mabel——”

“She is here!” exclaimed the girl, herself, who had mounted to the roof the moment she found the direction things were taking. “She is here! and, in the name of our holy religion, and of that God whom we profess

to worship in common, let there be no more bloodshed ! Enough has been spilt already ; and if these men will go away, Pathfinder—if they will depart peaceably, Jasper—oh ! do not detain one of them. My poor father is approaching his end, and it were better that he should draw his last breath in peace with the world. Go, go, Frenchmen and Indians ; we are no longer your enemies, and will harm none of you.”

“ Tut, tut, Magnet,” put in Cap, “ this sounds religious, perhaps, or like a book of poetry ; but it does not sound like common sense. The enemy is just ready to strike ; Jasper is anchored with his broadside to bear, and, no doubt, with springs on his cables ; Pathfinder’s eye and hand are as true as the needle ; and we shall get prize-money, head-money, and honour in the bargain, if you will not interfere for the next half hour.”

“ Well,” said Pathfinder, “ I incline to Mabel’s way of thinking. There *has* been enough blood shed to answer our purpose, and to sarve the King ; and as for honour, in that meaning,

it will do better for young ensigns and recruits, than for cool-headed, observant, Christian men. There is honour in doing what's right, and unhonour in doing what's wrong; and I think it wrong to take the life, even of a Mingo, without a useful end in view, I do; and right to hear reason at all times. So, Lieutenant Muir, let us know what your friends, the Frenchers and Indians, have to say for themselves."

"My friends!" said Muir, starting: "you'll no be calling the King's enemies my friends, Pathfinder, because the fortune of war has thrown me into their hands? Some of the greatest warriors, both of ancient and modern times, have been prisoners of war; and yon is Master Cap, who can testify whether we did not do all that men could devise to escape the calamity."

"Ay, ay," drily answered Cap; "escape is the proper word. We ran below and hid ourselves, and so discreetly, that we might have remained in the hole to this hour, had it not been for the necessity of re-stowing the bread

lockers. You burrowed on that occasion, Quarter-master, as handily as a fox ; and how the d—l you knew so well where to find the spot, is a matter of wonder to me. A regular skulk on board ship does not trail aft more readily, when the jib is to be stowed, than you went into that same hole.”

“And did ye no follow? There are moments in a man’s life when reason ascends to instinct—”

“And men descend into holes,” interrupted Cap, laughing, in his boisterous way, while Pathfinder chimed in, in his peculiar manner. Even Jasper, though still filled with concern for Mabel, was obliged to smile. “They say the d—l wouldn’t make a sailor if he didn’t look aloft ; and now, it seems, he’ll not make a soldier, if he doesn’t look below !”

This burst of merriment, though it was anything but agreeable to Muir, contributed largely towards keeping the peace. Cap fancied he had said a thing much better than common ; and that disposed him to yield his own opinion on the main point, so long as he got the good

opinion of his companions on his novel claim to be a wit. After a short discussion, all the savages on the island were collected in a body, without arms, at the distance of a hundred yards from the block, and under the gun of the Scud ; while Pathfinder descended to the door of the blockhouse, and settled the terms on which the island was to be finally evacuated by the enemy. Considering all the circumstances, the conditions were not very discreditable to either party. The Indians were compelled to give up all their arms, even to their knives and tomahawks, as a measure of precaution, their force being still quadruple that of their foes. The French officer, Monsieur Sanglier, as he was usually styled, and chose to call himself, remonstrated against this act as one likely to reflect more discredit on his command than any other part of the affair ; but Pathfinder, who had witnessed one or two Indian massacres, and knew how valueless pledges became when put in opposition to interest, where a savage was concerned, was obdurate. The second stipulation was of nearly

the same importance. It compelled Captain Sanglier to give up all his prisoners, who had been kept well guarded in the very hole or cave in which Cap and Muir had taken refuge. When these men were produced, four of them were found to be unhurt: they had fallen merely to save their lives, a common artifice in that species of warfare; and of the remainder, two were so slightly injured as not to be unfit for service. As they brought their muskets with them, this addition to his force immediately put Pathfinder at his ease; for, having collected all the arms of the enemy in the blockhouse, he directed these men to take possession of the building, stationing a regular sentinel at the door. The remainder of the soldiers were dead, the badly wounded having been instantly despatched in order to obtain the much-coveted scalps.

As soon as Jasper was made acquainted with the terms, and the preliminaries had been so far observed as to render it safe for him to be absent, he got the Scud under weigh; and, running down to the point where the boats

had stranded, he took them in tow again, and making a few stretches, brought them into the leeward passage. Here all the savages instantly embarked, when Jasper took the boats in tow a third time, and, running off before the wind, he soon set them adrift quite a mile to leeward of the Island. The Indians were furnished with but a single oar in each boat to steer with, the young sailor well knowing that, by keeping before the wind, they would land on the shores of Canada in the course of the morning.

Captain Sanglier, Arrowhead, and June alone remained, when this disposition had been made of the rest of the party; the former having certain papers to draw up and sign with Lieutenant Muir, who, in his eyes, possessed the virtues which are attached to a commission; and the latter preferring, for reasons of his own, not to depart in company with his late friends, the Iroquois. Canoes were detained for the departure of these three, when the proper moment should arrive.

In the mean time, or while the Scud was

running down with the boats in tow, Pathfinder and Cap, aided by proper assistants, busied themselves with preparing a breakfast ; most of the party not having eaten for four-and-twenty hours. The brief space that passed in this manner, before the Scud came-to again, was little interrupted by discourse, though Pathfinder found leisure to pay a visit to the Sergeant, to say a few friendly words to Mabel, and to give such directions as he thought might smooth the passage of the dying man. As for Mabel, herself, he insisted on her taking some light refreshment, and there no longer existing any motive for keeping it there, he had the guard removed from the block, in order that the daughter might have no impediment to her attentions to her father. These little arrangements completed, our hero returned to the fire, around which he found all the remainder of the party assembled, including Jasper.

CHAPTER VII.

You saw but sorrow in its waning form ;
A working sea remaining from a storm,
Where now the weary waves roll o'er the deep,
And faintly murmur ere they fall asleep.

DRYDEN.

MEN accustomed to a warfare like that we have been describing, are not apt to be much under the influence of the tender feelings while still in the field. Notwithstanding their habits, however, more than one heart was with Mabel in the block, while the incidents we are about to relate were in the course of occurrence ; and even the indispensable meal was less relished by the hardiest of the soldiers than it might have been, had not the Sergeant been so near his end.

As Pathfinder returned from the block, he was met by Muir, who led him aside in order

to hold a private discourse. The manner of the Quarter-master had that air of supererogatory courtesy about it, which almost invariably denotes artifice; for while physiognomy and phrenology are but lame sciences at the best, and perhaps lead to as many false as right conclusions, we hold that there is no more infallible evidence of insincerity of purpose, short of overt acts, than a face that smiles when there is no occasion, and the tongue that is out of measure smooth. Muir had much of this manner in common, mingled with an apparent frankness that his Scottish intonation of voice, Scottish accent, and Scottish modes of expression, were singularly adapted to sustain. He owed his preferment, indeed, to a long-exercised deference to Lundie and his family; for, while the Major himself was much too acute to be the dupe of one so much his inferior in real talents and attainments, most persons are accustomed to make liberal concessions to the flatterer, even while they distrust his truth, and are perfectly aware of his motives. On the present

occasion, the contest in skill was between two men as completely the opposites of each other in all the leading essentials of character, as very well could be. Pathfinder was as simple as the Quarter-master was practised; he was as sincere as the other was false, and as direct as the last was tortuous. Both were cool and calculating, and both were brave, though in different modes and degrees; Muir never exposing his person except for effect, while the guide included fear among the rational passions, or as a sensation to be deferred to, only when good might come of it.

“My dearest friend,” Muir commenced, “for ye’ll be dearer to us all, by seventy and seven-fold, after your late conduct, than ever ye were, ye’ve just established yourself, in this late transaction. It’s true, that they’ll not be making ye a commissioned officer, for that species of prefairment is not much in your line, nor much in your wishes, I’m thinking; but as a guide and a counsellor, and a loyal subject, and an expert marksman, yer renown may be said to be full. I

doubt if the commander-in-chief will carry away with him from America, as much credit as will fall to yer share, and ye ought just to set down in content, and enjoy yourself for the remainder of yer days. Get married, man, without delay, and look to your precious happiness; for ye've no occasion to look any longer to your glory. Take Mabel Dunham, for Heaven's sake, to your bosom, and ye'll have both a bonny bride, and a bonny reputation."

"Why, Quarter-master, this is a new piece of advice to come from your mouth. They've told me I had a rival in you."

"And ye had, man; and a formidable one, too, I can tell ye. One that has never yet courted in vain, and yet one that has courted five times. Lundie twits me with four, and I deny the charge; but he little thinks the truth would outdo even his arithmetic. Yes, yes, ye had a rival, Pathfinder; but ye've one no longer in me. Ye've my hearty wishes for yer success with Mabel; and were the honest Sergeant likely to survive, ye might

rely on my good word with him, too, for a certainty."

"I feel your friendship, Quarter-master, I feel your friendship, though I have no great need of any favour with Sergeant Dunham, who has long been my friend. I believe we may look upon the matter to be as certain as most things in war-time; for Mabel and her father consenting, the whole 55th couldn't very well put a stop to it. Ah's me! the poor father will scarcely live to see what his heart has so long been set upon."

"But he'll have the consolation of knowing it will come to pass, in dying. Oh! it's a great relief, Pathfinder, for the parting spirit to feel certain that the beloved ones left behind will be well provided for, after its departure. All the Mistress Muirs have duly expressed that sentiment, with their dying breaths."

"All your wives, Quarter-master, have been likely to feel this consolation."

"Out upon ye, man! I'd no thought ye such a wag. Well, well; pleasant words

make no heart-burnings between auld fri'nds. If I cannot espouse Mabel, ye'll no object to my esteeming her, and speaking well of her, and of yoursal', too, on all suitable occasions, and in all companies. But, Pathfinder, ye'll easily understan' that a poor deevil, who loses such a bride, will probably stand in need of some consolation?"

"Quite likely, quite likely, Quarter-master," returned the simple-minded guide; "I know the loss of Mabel would be found heavy to be borne by myself. It may bear hard on your feelings to see us married; but the death of the Sergeant will be likely to put it off, and you'll have time to think more manfully of it, you will."

"I'll bear up against it; yes, I'll bear up against it, though my heart-strings crack; and ye might help me, man, by giving me something to do. Ye'll understand that this expedition has been of a very peculiar nature, for here am I, bearing the King's commission, just a volunteer, as it might be; while a mere orderly has had the command. I've submit-

ted for various reasons, though my blood has boiled to be in authority, while ye war' battling for the honour of the country, and his Majesty's rights—"

"Quarter-master," interrupted the guide, "you fell so early into the enemy's hands, that your conscience ought to be easily satisfied on that score; so take my advice, and say nothing about it."

"That 's just my opinion, Pathfinder; we'll all say nothing about it. Sergeant Dunham is *hors de combat*—"

"Anan?" said the guide.

"Why the Sergeant can command no longer, and it will hardly do to leave a corporal at the head of a victorious party like this; for flowers that will bloom in a garden will die on a heath; and I was just thinking I would claim the authority that belongs to one who holds a Lieutenant's commission. As for the men, they'll no dare to raise any objection, and as for yoursal', my dear friend, now that ye've so much honour, and Mabel, and the consciousness of having done yer duty, which

is more precious than all, I expect to find an ally rather than one to oppose the plan."

"As for commanding the soldiers of the 55th, Lieutenant, it is your right, I suppose, and no one here will be likely to gainsay it; though you've been a prisoner of war, and there are men who might stand out ag'in giving up their authority to a prisoner released by their own deeds. Still no one here will be likely to say anything hostile to your wishes."

"That's just it, Pathfinder; and when I come to draw up the report of our success against the boats, and the defence of the block, together with the general operations, including the capitulation, ye'll no find any omission of your claims and merits."

"Tut, for my claims and merits, Quartermaster! Lundie knows what I am in the forest, and what I am in the fort; and the General knows better than he. No fear of me; tell your own story, only taking care to do justice by Mabel's father, who, in one sense, is the commanding-officer at this very moment."

Muir expressed his entire satisfaction with this arrangement, as well as his determination to do justice by all, when the two went to the group that was assembled round the fire. Here the Quarter-master began, for the first time since leaving Oswego, to assume some of the authority that might properly be supposed to belong to his rank. Taking the remaining corporal aside, he distinctly told that functionary that he must in future be regarded as one holding the King's commission, and directed him to acquaint his subordinates with the new state of things. This change in the dynasty was effected without any of the usual symptoms of a revolution; for, as all well understood the Lieutenant's legal claims to command, no one felt disposed to dispute his orders. For reasons best known to themselves, Lundie and the Quarter-master had originally made a different disposition; and now, for reasons of his own, the latter had seen fit to change it. This was reasoning enough for soldiers, though the hurt received by Sergeant Dunham would have sufficiently explained

the circumstance, had an explanation been required.

All this time Captain Sanglier was looking after his own breakfast, with the resignation of a philosopher, the coolness of a veteran, the ingenuity and science of a Frenchman, and the voracity of an ostrich. This person had now been in the colony some thirty years, having left France in some such situation in his own army as Muir filled in the 55th. An iron constitution, perfect obduracy of feeling, a certain address well suited to manage savages, and an indomitable courage, had early pointed him out to the commander-in-chief, as a suitable agent to be employed in directing the military operations of his Indian allies. In this capacity, then, he had risen to the titular rank of captain; and with his promotion, had acquired a portion of the habits and opinions of his associates, with a facility and an adaptation of self, that are thought in this part of the world to be peculiar to his countrymen. He had often led parties of the Iroquois in their predatory expeditions; and his conduct on such

occasions exhibited the contradictory results of both alleviating the misery produced by this species of warfare, and of augmenting it by the broader views and greater resources of civilisation. In other words, he planned enterprises that, in their importance and consequences, much exceeded the usual policy of the Indians, and then stepped in to lessen some of the evils of his own creating. In short, he was an adventurer whom circumstances had thrown into a situation, where the callous qualities of men of his class might readily show themselves, for good or for evil ; and he was not of a character to baffle fortune by any ill-timed squeamishness on the score of early impressions, or to trifle with her liberality, by unnecessarily provoking her frowns through wanton cruelty. Still, as his name was unavoidably connected with many of the excesses committed by his parties, he was generally considered, in the American Provinces, a wretch who delighted in bloodshed, and who found his greatest happiness in tormenting the helpless and the innocent ; and the name of Sanglier,

which was a sobriquet of his own adopting, or of Flint Heart, as he was usually termed on the borders, had got to be as terrible to the women and children of that part of the country, as those of Butler and Brandt became at a later day.

The meeting between Pathfinder and Sanglier bore some resemblance to that celebrated interview between Wellington and Blucher, which has been so often and graphically told. It took place at the fire ; and the parties stood earnestly regarding each other for more than a minute without speaking. Each felt that in the other he saw a formidable foe ; and each felt, while he ought to treat the other with the manly liberality due to a warrior, that there was little in common between them, in the way of character, as well as of interests. One served for money and preferment ; the other, because his life had been cast in the wilderness, and the land of his birth needed his arm and experience. The desire of rising above his present situation, never disturbed the tranquillity of Pathfinder ; nor had he ever known

an ambitious thought, as ambition usually betrays itself, until he became acquainted with Mabel. Since then, indeed, distrust of himself, reverence for her, and the wish to place her in a situation above that which he then filled, had caused him some uneasy moments; but the directness and simplicity of his character had early afforded the required relief; and he soon came to feel, that the woman who would not hesitate to accept him for her husband, would not scruple to share his fortunes, however humble. He respected Sanglier, as a brave warrior; and he had far too much of that liberality which is the result of practical knowledge, to believe half of what he had heard to his prejudice; for the most bigoted and illiberal on every subject, are usually those who know nothing about it; but he could not approve of his selfishness, cold-blooded calculations, and least of all, of the manner in which he forgot his "white gifts," to adopt those that were purely "red." On the other hand, Pathfinder was a riddle to Captain Sanglier. The latter could not comprehend the other's

motives ; he had often heard of his disinterestedness, justice, and truth ; and, in several instances, they had led him into grave errors, on that principle by which a frank and open-mouthed diplomatist is said to keep his secrets better than one that is close-mouthed and wily.

After the two heroes had gazed at each other, in the manner mentioned, Monsieur Sanglier touched his cap, for the rudeness of a border life had not entirely destroyed the courtesy of manner he had acquired in youth, nor extinguished that appearance of *bonhomme* which seems inbred in a Frenchman.

“Monsieur le Pathfinder,” he said, with a very decided accent, though with a friendly smile, “*un militaire* honour *le courage, et la loyauté*. You speak Iroquois?”

“Ay, I understand the language of the riptyles, and can get along with it, if there’s occasion,” returned the literal and truth-telling guide, “but it’s neither a tongue nor a tribe to my taste. Wherever you find the Mingo blood, in my opinion, Master Flinty-heart, you find a knave. Well, I’ve seen you often

though it was in battle; and, I must say, it was always in the van. You must know most of our bullets by sight?"

"Nevvair, sair, your own; *une balle* from your honourable hand, be sairtaine deat'. You kill my best warrior on some island."

"That may be, that may be; though I dare say, if the truth was known, they would turn out to be great rascals. No offence to you, Master Flinty-heart, but you keep desperate evil company."

"Yes, sair," returned the Frenchman, who, bent on saying that which was courteous himself, and comprehending with difficulty, was disposed to think he received a compliment, "you too good. But *un brave* always *comme ça*. What that mean? ha! what that *jeune homme* do?"

The hand and eye of Captain Sanglier directed the look of Pathfinder to the opposite side of the fire, where Jasper, just at that moment, had been rudely seized by two of the soldiers, who were binding his arms, under the direction of Muir.

“What does that mean, indeed?” cried the guide, stepping forward, and shoving the two subordinates away with a power of muscle that would not be denied. “Who has the heart to do this to Jasper Eau-douce? and who has the boldness to do it before my eyes?”

“It is by my orders, Pathfinder,” answered the Quarter-master, “and I command it on my own responsibility. Ye’ll no tak’ on yourself to dispute the legality of orders given by one who bears the King’s commission, to the King’s soldiers?”

“I’d dispute the King’s words, if they came from the King’s own mouth, did he say that Jasper deserves this. Has not the lad just saved all our scalps? taken us from defeat, and given us victory? No, no, Lieutenant; if this is the first use that you make of your authority, I, for one, will not respect it.”

“This savours a little of insubordination,” answered Muir, “but we can bear much from Pathfinder. It is true this Jasper has *seemed* to serve us in this affair, but we ought not to overlook past transactions. Did not Major

Duncan himself, denounce him to Sergeant Dunham, before we left the post? Have we not seen sufficient with our own eyes, to make sure of having been betrayed? and is it not natural, and almost necessary, to believe that this young man has been the traitor. Ah! Pathfinder, ye'll no be making yourself a great statesman, or a great captain, if you put too much faith in appearances. Lord bless me! Lord bless me! if I do not believe, could the truth be come at, as you often say yourself, Pathfinder, that hypocrisy is a more common vice than even envy, and that's the bane o' human nature."

Captain Sanglier shrugged his shoulders; then he looked earnestly from Jasper towards the Quarter-master, and from the Quarter-master towards Jasper.

"I care not for your envy, or your hypocrisy, or even for your human natur'," returned Pathfinder. "Jasper Eau-douce is my friend; Jasper Eau-douce is a brave lad, and an honest lad, and a loyal lad; and no man of the 55th shall lay hands on him, short of Lundie's own

orders, while I'm in the way to prevent it. You may have authority over your soldiers; but you have none over Jasper or me, Master Muir."

"*Bon!*" ejaculated Sanglier, the sound partaking equally of the energies of the throat and of the nose.

"Will ye no hearken to reason, Pathfinder? Ye'll no be forgetting our suspicions and judgments; and here is another circumstance to augment and aggravate them all. Ye can see this little bit of bunting; well, where should it be found, but by Mabel Dunham, on the branch of a tree on this very island, just an hour or so before the attack of the enemy; and if ye'll be at the trouble to look at the fly of the Scud's ensign, ye'll just say that the cloth has been cut from out it. Circumstantial evidence was never stronger."

"*Ma foi, c'est un peu fort, ceci,*" growled Sanglier, between his teeth.

"Talk to me of no ensigns and signals, when I know the heart," continued the Pathfinder. "Jasper has the gift of honesty; and

it is too rare a gift to be trifled with, like a Mingo's conscience. No, no; off hands, or we shall see which can make the stoutest battle; you and your men of the 55th, or the Sarpent here, and killdeer, with Jasper and his crew. You overrate your force, Lieutenant Muir, as much as you underrate Eau-douce's truth."

"*Très bon!*"

"Well, if I must speak plainly, Pathfinder, I e'en must. Captain Sanglier, here, and Arrowhead, this brave Tuscarora, have both informed me that this unfortunate boy is the traitor. After such testimony, you can no longer oppose my right to correct him, as well as the necessity of the act."

"*Scélérat,*" muttered the Frenchman.

"Captain Sanglier is a brave soldier, and will not gainsay the conduct of an honest sailor," put in Jasper. "Is there any traitor here, Captain Flinty-heart?"

"Ay," added Muir, "let him speak out then; since ye wish it, unhappy youth! that the truth may be known. I only hope that ye

may escape the last punishment when a court will be sitting on your misdeeds. How is it, Captain; do ye, or do ye not, see a traitor amang us?"

"*Oui*—yes, Sair—*bien sûr*."

"Too much lie!" said Arrowhead, in a voice of thunder, striking the breast of Muir with the back of his own hand, in a sort of ungovernable gesture; "where my warriors?—where Yengeese scalp? Too much lie!"

Muir wanted not for personal courage, nor for a certain sense of personal honour. The violence which had been intended only for a gesture, he mistook for a blow; for conscience was suddenly aroused within him, and he stepped back a pace, extending his hand towards a gun. His face was livid with rage, and his countenance expressed the fell intention of his heart. But Arrowhead was too quick for him: with a wild glance of the eye the Tuscarora looked about him; then thrust a hand beneath his own girdle; drew forth a concealed knife; and, in the twinkling of an eye, buried it in the body of the Quarter-master to the handle. As

the latter fell at his feet, gazing into his face with the vacant stare of one surprised by death, Sanglier took a pinch of snuff, and said, in a calm voice:—

“*Voilà l'affaire finie ; mais,*” shrugging his shoulders, “*ce n'est qu'un scélérat de moins.*”

The act was too sudden to be prevented ; and when Arrowhead, uttering a yell, bounded into the bushes, the white men were too confounded to follow. Chingachgook, however, was more collected ; and the bushes had scarcely closed on the passing body of the Tuscarora, than they were again opened by that of the Delaware in full pursuit.

Jasper Western spoke French fluently, and the words and manner of Sanglier struck him.

“Speak, Monsieur,” he said, in English, “*am I the traitor ?*”

“*Le voilà,*” answered the cool Frenchman, “*dat is our espion—our agent—our friend—ma foi—c'était un grand scélérat—voici.*”

While speaking, Sanglier bent over the dead body, and thrust his hand into a pocket of the Quarter-master, out of which he drew a purse.

Emptying the contents on the ground, several double-louis rolled towards the soldiers, who were not slow in picking them up. Casting the purse from him in contempt, the soldier of fortune turned towards the soup he had been preparing with so much care; and finding it to his liking, he began to break his fast, with an air of indifference that the most stoical Indian warrior might have envied.

CHAPTER VIII.

The only amaranthian flower on earth
Is virtue ; th' only lasting treasure, truth.

COWPER.

THE reader must imagine some of the occurrences that followed the sudden death of Muir. While his body was in the hands of his soldiers, who laid it decently aside, and covered it with a great-coat, Chingachgook silently resumed his place at the fire, and both Sanglier and Pathfinder remarked that he carried a fresh and bleeding scalp at his girdle. No one asked any questions ; and the former, although perfectly satisfied that Arrowhead had fallen, manifested neither curiosity nor feeling. He continued calmly eating his soup, as if the meal had been tranquil as usual. There was something of pride, and of an assumed indifference to

fate, imitated from the Indians in all this ; but there was more that really resulted from practice, habitual self-command, and constitutional hardihood. With Pathfinder the case was a little different in feeling, though much the same in appearance. He disliked Muir, whose smooth-tongued courtesy was little in accordance with his own frank and ingenuous nature ; but he had been shocked at his unexpected and violent death, though accustomed to similar scenes, and he had been surprised at the exposure of his treachery. With a view to ascertain the extent of the latter, as soon as the body was removed, he began to question the Captain on the subject. The latter having no particular motive for secrecy, now that his agent was dead, in the course of the breakfast revealed the following circumstances, which will serve to clear up some of the minor incidents of our tale.

Soon after the 55th appeared on the frontiers, Muir had volunteered his services to the enemy. In making his offers, he boasted of his intimacy with Lundie, and of the means

it afforded of furnishing more accurate and important information than usual. His terms had been accepted, and Monsieur Sanglier had several interviews with him, in the vicinity of the fort at Oswego, and had actually passed one entire night secreted in the garrison. Arrowhead, however, was the usual channel of communication, and the anonymous letter to Major Duncan had been originally written by Muir, transmitted to Frontenac, copied, and sent back by the Tuscarora, who was returning from that errand when captured by the Scud. It is scarcely necessary to add that Jasper was to be sacrificed, in order to conceal the Quarter-master's treason, and that the position of the island had been betrayed to the enemy by the latter. An extraordinary compensation, that which was found in his purse, had induced him to accompany the party under Sergeant Dunham, in order to give the signals that were to bring on the attack. The disposition of Muir towards the sex was a natural weakness, and he would have married Mabel, or any one else who would

accept his hand ; but his admiration of her was in a great degree feigned, in order that he might have an excuse for accompanying the party, without sharing in the responsibility of its defeat, or incurring the risk of having no other strong and seemingly sufficient motive. Much of this was known to Captain Sanglier, particularly the part in connection with Mabel, and he did not fail to let his auditors into the whole secret, frequently laughing in a sarcastic manner, as he revealed the different expedients of the luckless Quarter-master.

“ *Touchez-la,*” said the cold-blooded partisan, holding out his sinewy hand to Pathfinder, when he ended his explanations ; “ you be *honnête*, and dat is *beaucoup*. We tak’ de spy as we tak’ *la médecine*, for de good ; mais, *je les déteste ! Touchez-la.*”

“ I ’ll shake your hand, captain, I will ; for you ’re a lawful and nat’ral inimy ;” returned Pathfinder, “ and a manful one ; but the body of the Quarter-master shall never disgrace English ground. I did intend to carry it back

to Lundie, that he might play his bagpipes over it; but now it shall lie here, on the spot where he acted his villany, and have his own treason for a headstone. Captain Flintyheart, I suppose this consorting with traitors is a part of a soldier's regular business; but, I tell you honestly, it is not to my liking, and I'd rather it should be you than I who had this affair on his conscience. What an awful sinner! To plot, right and left, ag'in country, friends, and the Lord! Jasper, boy, a word with you aside, for a single minute."

Pathfinder now led the young man apart; and squeezing his hand, with the tears in his own eyes, he continued:—

"You know me, Eau-douce, and I know you," he said, "and this news has not changed my opinion of you in any manner. I never believed their tales, though it looked solemn at one minute, I will own; yes, it did look solemn; and it made me feel solemn too. I never suspected you for a minute, for I know your gifts don't lie that-a-way; but I must own, I didn't suspect the Quarter-master neither."

“ And he holding his Majesty’s commission, Pathfinder !”

“ It isn’t so much that, Jasper Western ; it isn’t so much that. He held a commission from God to act right, and to deal fairly with his fellow-creatures, and he has failed awfully in his duty.”

“ To think of his pretending love for one like Mabel too, when he felt none !”

“ That was bad, sartainly ; the fellow must have had Mingo blood in his veins. The man that deals unfairly by a woman can be but a mongrel, lad ; for the Lord has made them helpless on purpose that we may gain their love by kindness and sarvices. Here is the Sergeant, poor man, on his dying bed ; he has given me his daughter for a wife, and Mabel, dear girl, she has consented to it ; and it makes me feel that I have two welfares to look after, two natur’s to care for, and two hearts to gladden. Ah’s me ! Jasper ; I sometimes feel that I’m not good enough for that sweet child !”

Eau-douce had nearly gasped for breath

when he first heard this intelligence ; and, though he succeeded in suppressing any other outward signs of agitation, his cheek was blanched nearly to the paleness of death. Still he found means to answer not only with firmness, but with energy :—

“ Say not so, Pathfinder ; you are good enough for a queen.”

“ Ay, ay, boy, according to your ideas of my goodness ; that is to say, I can kill a deer, or even a Mingo at need, with any man on the lines ; or I can follow a forest-path with as true an eye, or read the stars, when others do not understand them. No doubt, no doubt, Mabel will have venison enough, and fish enough, and pigeons enough ; but will she have knowledge enough, and will she have ideas enough, and pleasant conversation enough, when life comes to drag a little, and each of us begins to pass for our true value ?”

“ If you pass for your value, Pathfinder, the greatest lady in the land would be happy with you. On that head, you have no reason to feel afraid.”

“ Now, Jasper, I dare to say *you* think so, nay, I *know* you do ; for it is nat’ral, and according to friendship, for people to look over-favourably at them they love. Yes, yes ; if I had to marry you, boy, I should give myself no consarn about my being well looked upon, for you have always shown a disposition to see me and all I do with friendly eyes. But a young gal, after all, must wish to marry a man that is nearer to her own age and fancies, than to have one old enough to be her father, and rude enough to frighten her. I wonder, Jasper, that Mabel never took a fancy to you, now, rather than setting her mind on me.”

“ Take a fancy to me ! Pathfinder,” returned the young man, endeavouring to clear his voice without betraying himself ; “ what is there about me to please such a girl as Mabel Dunham ? I have all that you find fault with in yourself, with none of that excellence that makes even the Generals respect you.”

“ Well, well, it’s all chance, say what we will about it. Here have I journeyed and guided through the woods, female after female, and

consorted with them in the garrisons, and never have I even felt an inclination for any, until I saw Mabel Dunham. It's true the poor Sergeant first set me to thinking about his daughter; but after we got a little acquainted like, I'd no need of being spoken to, to think of her night and day. I'm tough, Jasper; yes, I'm very tough; and I'm risolute enough, as you all know; and yet I do think it would quite break me down, now, to lose Mabel Dunham!"

"We will talk no more of it, Pathfinder," said Jasper, returning his friend's squeeze of the hand, and moving back towards the fire, though slowly and in the manner of one who cared little where he went; "we will talk no more of it. You are worthy of Mabel, and Mabel is worthy of you — you like Mabel, and Mabel likes you — her father has chosen you for her husband, and no one has a right to interfere. As for the Quarter-master, his feigning love for Mabel, is worse even than his treason to the King."

By this time they were so near the fire, that

it was necessary to change the conversation. Luckily, at that instant, Cap, who had been in the block in company with his dying brother-in-law, and who knew nothing of what had passed since the capitulation, now appeared, walking with a meditative and melancholy air towards the group. Much of that hearty dogmatism, that imparted even to his ordinary air and demeanour an appearance of something like contempt for all around him, had disappeared, and he seemed thoughtful, if not meek.

“ This death, gentlemen,” he said, when he had got sufficiently near, “ is a melancholy business, make the best of it. Now, here is Sergeant Dunham, a very good soldier, I make no question, about to slip his cable, and yet he holds on to the better end of it, as if he was determined it should never run out of the hawse-hole ; and all because he loves his daughter, it seems to me. For my part, when a friend is really under the necessity of making a long journey, I always wish him well and happily off.”

“ You wouldn’t kill the Sergeant before his time ?” Pathfinder reproachfully answered. “ Life is sweet, even to the aged ; and, for that matter, I’ve known some that seemed to set much store by it, when it got to be of the least value.”

Nothing had been farther from Cap’s real thoughts, than the wish to hasten his brother-in-law’s end. He had found himself embarrassed with the duties of smoothing a death-bed, and all he had meant was to express a sincere desire that the Sergeant were happily rid of doubt and suffering. A little shocked, therefore, at the interpretation that had been put on his words, he rejoined with some of the asperity of the man, though rebuked by a consciousness of not having done his own wishes justice—

“ You are too old and too sensible a person, Pathfinder,” he said, “ to fetch a man up with a surge, when he is paying out his ideas in distress, as it might be. Sergeant Dunham is both my brother-in-law and my friend, — that is to say, as intimate a friend as a soldier well

can be with a seafaring-man, and I respect and honour him accordingly. I make no doubt, moreover, that he has lived such a life as becomes a man, and there can be no great harm, after all, in wishing any one well berthed in heaven. Well! we are mortal the best of us, that you'll not deny; and it ought to be a lesson not to feel pride in our strength and beauty. Where is the Quarter-master, Pathfinder? It is proper he should come and have a parting word with the poor Sergeant, who is only going a little before us."

"You have spoken more truth, Master Cap, than you've been knowing to, all this time; in which there is no great wonder, howsoever; mankind as often telling biting truths when they least mean it, as at any other time. You might have gone further, notwithstanding, and said that we are mortal, the *worst* of us, which is quite as true, and a good deal more wholesome than saying that we are mortal, the *best* of us. As for the Quarter-master's coming to speak a parting word to the Sergeant, it is quite out of the question, seeing that he has

gone ahead, and that too with little parting notice to himself, or to any one else."

"You are not quite as clear as common in your language, Pathfinder. I know that we ought all to have solemn thoughts on these occasions, but I see no use in speaking in parables."

"If my words are not plain, the idee is. In short, Master Cap, while Sergeant Dunham has been preparing himself for a long journey, like a conscientious and honest man as he is, deliberately and slowly, the Quarter-master has started, in a hurry, before him; and, although it is a matter on which it does not become me to be very positive, I give it as my opinion that they travel such different roads, that they will never meet."

"Explain yourself, my friend," said the bewildered seaman, looking around him in search of Muir, whose absence began to excite his distrust. "I see nothing of the Quarter-Master, but I think him too much of a man to run away, now that the victory is gained. If the fight were ahead, instead of in our wake, the case would be altered."

“There lies all that is left of him, beneath that great-coat,” returned the guide, who then briefly related the manner of the Lieutenant’s death. “The Tuscarora was as venomous in his blow, as a rattler, though he failed to give the warning,” continued Pathfinder. “I’ve seen many a desperate fight, and several of these sudden outbreaks of savage temper ; but never, before, did I see a human soul quit the body more unexpectedly, or at a worse moment for the hopes of the dying man. His breath was stopped with the lie on his lips, and the spirit might be said to have passed away, in the very ardour of wickedness.”

Cap listened with a gaping mouth ; and he gave two or three violent hems, as the other concluded, like one who distrusted his own respiration.

“This is an uncertain and uncomfortable life of yours, Master Pathfinder ; what between the fresh water and the savages,” he said, “and the sooner I get quit of it, the higher will be my opinion of myself. Now you mention it, I will say that the man ran for that berth in

the rocks, when the enemy first bore down upon us, with a sort of instinct that I thought surprising in an officer; but I was in too great a hurry to follow, to log the whole matter accurately. God bless me! God bless me! a traitor do you say, and ready to sell his country, and to a rascally Frenchman, too?"

"To sell anything; country, soul, body, Mabel and all our scalps, and no ways particular, I'll engage, as to the purchaser. The countrymen of Captain Flinty-heart here, were the paymasters this time."

"Just like 'em; ever ready to buy, when they can't thrash, and to run when they can do neither."

Monsieur Sanglier lifted his cap with ironical gravity, and acknowledged the compliment with an expression of polite contempt that was altogether lost on its insensible subject. But Pathfinder had too much native courtesy, and was far too just-minded, to allow the attack to go unnoticed.

"Well, well," he interposed, "to my mind there is no great difference 'atween an English-

man and a Frenchman, after all. They talk different tongues, and live under different kings, I will allow ; but both are human, and feel like human beings, when there is occasion for it. If a Frenchman is sometimes skeary, so is an Englishman ; and as for running away, why a man will, now and then, do it, as well as a horse, let him come of what people he may."

Captain Flinty-heart, as Pathfinder called him, made another obeisance ; but this time the smile was friendly, and not ironical ; for he felt that the intention was good, whatever might have been the mode of expressing it. Too philosophical, however, to heed what a man like Cap might say, or think, he finished his breakfast without allowing his attention to be again diverted from that important pursuit.

"My business here was principally with the Quarter-master," Cap continued, as soon as he had done regarding the prisoner's pantomime. "The Sergeant must be near his end, and I have thought he might wish to say something to his successor in authority, before he

finally departed. It is too late, it would seem ; and, as you say, Pathfinder, the Lieutenant has truly gone before."

"That he has, though on a different path. As for authority, I suppose the Corporal has now a right to command what's left of the 55th, though a small and worried, not to say frightened, party it is. But, if anything needs to be done, the chances are greatly in favour of my being called on to do it. I suppose, however, we have only to bury our dead, set fire to the block and the huts, for they stand in the enemy's territory, by position, if not by law, and must not be left for their convenience. Our using them again is out of the question ; for, now the Frenchers know where the island is to be found, it would be like thrusting the hand into a wolf-trap, with our eyes wide open. This part of the work, the Serpent and I will see to, for we are as practysed in retreats as in advances."

"All that is very well, my good friend ; and now for my poor brother-in-law : though he is a soldier, we cannot let him slip without

a word of consolation, and a leave-taking, in my judgment. This has been an unlucky affair, on every tack ; though I suppose it is what one had a right to expect, considering the state of the times, and the nature of the navigation. We must make the best of it, and try to help the worthy man to unmoor, without straining his messengers. Death is a circumstance, after all, Master Pathfinder, and one of a very general character, too, seeing that we must all submit to it, sooner or later."

"You say truth, you say truth; and for that reason I hold it to be wise to be always ready. I've often thought, Salt-water, that he is happiest who has the least to leave behind him when the summons comes. Now, here am I, a hunter and a scout, and a guide, although I do not own a foot of land on 'arth, yet do I enjoy and possess more than the great Albany Patroon. With the heavens over my head to keep me in mind of the last great hunt, and the dried leaves beneath my feet, I tramp over the ground as freely as if I was its lord and owner ; and what more need heart desire ?

I do not say that I love nothing that belongs to 'arth ; for I do, though not much, unless it might be Mabel Dunham, that I can't carry with me. I have some pups at the higher fort, that I vally considerable, though they are too noisy for warfare, and so we are compelled to live separate for awhile ; and then, I think, it would grieve me to part with killdeer ; but I see no reason why we should not be buried in the same grave, for we are, as near as can be, of the same length—six feet, to a hair's breadth ; but, bating these, and a pipe that the Sarpent gave me, and a few tokens, received from travellers, all of which might be put in a pouch, and laid under my head, when the order comes to march, I shall be ready at a minute's warning ; and, let me tell you, Master Cap, that's what I call a circumstance, too."

"'Tis just so with me," answered the sailor, as the two walked towards the block, too much occupied with their respective morality, to remember, at the moment, the melancholy errand they were on, "that's just my way of feeling

and reasoning. How often have I felt, when near shipwreck, the relief of not owning the craft ! ‘ If she goes,’ I have said to myself, ‘ why my life goes with her, but not my property, and there’s great comfort in that.’ I’ve discovered, in the course of boxing about the world, from the Horn to Cape North, not to speak of this run on a bit of fresh water, that if a man has a few dollars, and puts them in a chest, under lock and key, he is pretty certain to fasten up his heart in the same till ; and so I carry pretty much all I own, in a belt round my body, in order, as I say, to keep the vitals in the right place. D——me, Pathfinder, if I think a man without a heart any better than a fish with a hole in his air-bag.”

“ I don’t know how that may be, Master Cap ; but a man without a conscience is but a poor creatur’, take my word for it, as any one will discover who has to do with a Mingo. I trouble myself but little with dollars or half-joes, for these are the favoryte coin in this part of the world ; but I can easily believe, by what I’ve seen of mankind, that if a man

has a chest filled with either, he may be said to lock up his heart in the same box. I once hunted for two summers, during the last peace, and I collected so much peltry that I found my right feelings giving way to a craving after property ; and if I have consarn in marrying Mabel, it is that I may get to love such things too well, in order to make her comfortable."

"You're a philosopher, that's clear, Pathfinder ; and I don't know but you're a Christian."

"I should be out of humour with the man that gainsayed the last, Master Cap. I have not been Christianized by the Moravians, like so many of the Delawares, it is true ; but I hold to Christianity and white gifts. With me, it is as on-creditable for a white man not to be a Christian, as it is for a red-skin not to believe in his happy hunting-grounds ; indeed, after allowing for difference in traditions, and in some variations about the manner in which the spirit will be occupied after death, I hold that a good Delaware is a good Christian, though he never saw a Moravian ; and

a good Christian a good Delaware, so far as natur' is consarned. The Sarpent and I talk these matters over often, for he has a hankerin' after Christianity—"

"The d——l he has!" interrupted Cap. "And what does he intend to do in a church, with all the scalps he takes?"

"Don't run away with a false idee, friend Cap; don't run away with a false idee. These things are only skin-deep, and all depend on edication and nat'ral gifts. Look around you at mankind, and tell me why you see a red warrior here, a black one there, and white armies in another place? All this, and a great deal more of the same kind that I could point out, has been ordered for some special purpose; and it is not for us to fly in the face of facts, and deny their truth. No, no; each colour has its gifts, and its laws, and its traditions; and one is not to condemn another, because he does not exactly comprehend it."

"You must have read a great deal, Pathfinder, to see things as clear as this," returned Cap, who was not a little mystified by his com-

panion's simple creed. "It's all as plain as day to me now, though I must say I never fell in with these opinions before. What denomination do you belong to, my friend?"

"Anan?"

"What sect do you hold out for? What particular church do you fetch up in?"

"Look about you, and judge for yourself. I'm in church now; I eat in church, drink in church, sleep in church. The 'arth is the temple of the Lord, and I wait on him hourly, daily, without ceasing, I humbly hope. No, no, I'll not deny my blood and colour; but am Christian born, and shall die in the same faith. The Moravians tried me hard; and one of the King's chaplains has had his say, too, though that's a class no ways strenuous on such matters; and a missionary sent from Rome, talked much with me, as I guided him through the forest, during the last peace; but I've had one answer for them all: I'm a Christian already, and want to be neither Moravian, nor Churchman, nor Papist. No, no, I'll not deny my birth and blood."

“I think a word from you might lighten the Sergeant over the shoals of death, Master Pathfinder. He has no one with him but poor Mabel ; and she, you know, besides being his daughter, is but a girl and a child after all.”

“Mabel is feeble in body, friend Cap, but in matters of this natur’, I doubt if she may not be stronger than most men. But Sergeant Dunham is my friend, and he is your brother-in-law ; so, now the press of fighting and maintaining our rights is over, it is fitting we should both go and witness his departure. I’ve stood by many a dying man, Master Cap,” continued Pathfinder, who had a besetting propensity to enlarge on his experience, stopping and holding his companion by a button ; “I’ve stood by many a dying man’s side, and seen his last gasp, and heard his last breath ; for, when the hurry and tumult of the battle is over, it is good to bethink us of the misfortunate, and it is remarkable to witness how differently human natur’ feels at such solemn moments. Some go their way as stupid and ignorant as if God had never given

them reason, and an accountable state; while others quit us rejoicing, like men who leave heavy burthens behind them. I think that the mind sees clearly at such moments, my friend; and, that past deeds stand thick before the recollection."

"I'll engage they do, Pathfinder. I have witnessed something of this myself, and hope I'm the better man for it. I remember once that I thought my own time had come, and the log was overhauled with a diligence I did not think myself capable of until that moment. I've not been a very great sinner, friend Pathfinder; that is to say, never on a large scale; though, I dare say, if the truth were spoken, a considerable amount of small matters might be raked up against me, as well as against another man; but then, I've never committed piracy, nor high-treason, nor arson, nor any of them sort of things. As to smuggling, and the like of that, why I'm a seafaring man, and I suppose all callings have their weak spots. I dare say, your trade is not altogether without blemish, honourable and useful as it seems to be?"

“Many of the scouts and guides are desperate knaves ; and, like the Quarter-master here, some of them take pay of both sides. I hope I’m not one of them, though all occupations lead to temptations. Thrice have I been sorely tried in my life, and once I yielded a little, though I hope it was not in a matter to disturb a man’s conscience in his last moments. The first time was when I found in the woods a pack of skins that I knowed belonged to a Frencher, who was hunting on our side of the lines, where he had no business to be ; twenty-six as handsome beavers as ever gladdened human eyes. Well, that was a sore temptation ; for I thought the law would have been almost with me, although it was in peace times. But then, I remembered that such laws wasn’t made for us hunters, and bethought me that the poor man might have built great expectations for the next winter, on the sale of his skins ; and I left them where they lay. Most of our people said I did wrong ; but the manner in which I slept that night convinced me that I had done right. The next trial was when I

found the rifle, that is sartainly the only one in this part of the world that can be calculated on as surely as killdeer, and knowed that by taking it, or even hiding it, I might at once rise to be the first shot in all these parts. I was then young, and by no means as expart as I have since got to be, and youth is ambitious and striving; but, God be praised ! I mastered that feeling; and, friend Cap, what is almost as good, I mastered my rival in as fair a shooting-match as was ever witnessed in a garrison; he with his piece, and I with killdeer, and before the General in person, too !” Here Pathfinder stopped to laugh, his triumph still glittering in his eyes, and glowing on his sunburnt and browned cheek. “ Well, the next conflict with the devil was the hardest of them all, and that was when I came suddenly upon a camp of six Mingos, asleep in the woods, with their guns and horns piled in a way that enabled me to get possession of them without waking a miscreant of them all. What an opportunity that would have been for the Serpent, who would have despatched them, one after an-

other, with his knife, and had their six scalps at his girdle, in about the time it takes me to tell you the story. Oh ! he's a valiant warrior, that Chingachgook, and as honest as he's brave, and as good as he's honest !"

"And what may *you* have done in this matter, Master Pathfinder?" demanded Cap, who began to be interested in the result, "it seems to me, you had made either a very lucky, or a very unlucky landfall."

"'Twas lucky, and 'twas unlucky, if you can understand that. 'Twas unlucky, for it proved a desperate trial ; and yet 'twas lucky, all things considered ; in the ind. I did not touch a hair of their heads, for a white man has no nat'ral gifts to take scalps ; nor did I even make sure of one of their rifles. I distrusted myself, knowing that a Mingo is no favourite, in my own eyes."

"As for the scalps, I think you were right enough, my worthy friend ; but as for the armament and the stores, they would have been condemned by any prize-court in Christendom."

“That they would, that they would; but then the Mingos would have gone clear, seeing that a white man can no more attack an unarmed, than a sleeping inimy. No, no, I did myself, and my colour, and my religion, too, greater justice. I waited till their nap was over, and they well on their war-path again; and by ambushing them here, and flanking them there, I peppered the blackguards intrinsically, like,” Pathfinder occasionally caught a fine word from his associates, and used it a little vaguely; “that only one ever got back to his village, and he came into his wigwam limping. Luckily, as it turned out, the great Delaware had only halted to jerk some venison, and was following on my trail; and when he got up, he had five of the scoundrels’ scalps hanging where they ought to be; so, you see, nothing was lost by doing right, either in the way of honour or in that of profit.”

Cap grunted an assent, though the distinctions in his companion’s morality, it must be owned, were not exactly clear to his understanding. The two had occasionally moved

towards the block, as they conversed, and then stopped again, as some matter of more interest than common brought them to a halt. They were now so near the building, however, that neither thought of pursuing the subject any further ; but each prepared himself for the final scene with Sergeant Dunham.

CHAPTER IX.

Thou barraine ground, whom winter's wrath hath wasted,
Art made a mirror to behold my plight :
Whil'ome thy fresh spring flower'd ; and after hasted
Thy summer proude, with daffodillies dight ;
And now is come thy winter's stormy state,
Thy mantle mar'd wherein thou maskedst late.

SPENSER.

ALTHOUGH the soldier may regard danger, and even death, with indifference, in the tumult of battle, when the passage of the soul is delayed to moments of tranquillity and reflection, the change commonly brings with it the usual train of solemn reflections ; of regrets for the past ; and of doubts and anticipations for the future. Many a man has died with an heroic expression on his lips, but with heaviness and distrust at his heart ; for, whatever may be the varieties of our religious creeds, let us

depend on the mediation of Christ, the dogmas of Mahomet, or the elaborated allegories of the East, there is a conviction, common to all men, that death is but the stepping-stone between this and a more elevated state of being. Sergeant Dunham was a brave man; but he was departing for a country in which resolution could avail him nothing; and as he felt himself gradually loosened from the grasp of the world, his thoughts and feelings took the natural direction; for, if it be true that death is the great leveller, in nothing is it more true, than that it reduces all to the same views of the vanity of life.

Pathfinder, though a man of quaint and peculiar habits and opinions, was always thoughtful and disposed to view the things around him with a shade of philosophy, as well as with seriousness. In him, therefore, the scene in the blockhouse awakened no very novel feelings. But the case was different with Cap: rude, opinionated, dogmatical, and boisterous, the old sailor was little accustomed to view even death, with any approach to the

gravity that its importance demands; and, notwithstanding all that had passed, and his real regard for his brother-in-law, he now entered the room of the dying man, with much of that callous unconcern which was the fruit of long training in a school that, while it gives so many lessons in the sublimest truths, generally wastes its admonitions on scholars who are little disposed to profit by them.

The first proof that Cap gave of his not entering as fully as those around him into the solemnity of the moment, was by commencing a narration of the events which had just led to the deaths of Muir and Arrowhead. "Both tripped their anchors in a hurry, brother Dunham," he concluded; "and you have the consolation of knowing that others have gone before you in the great journey, and they, too, men whom you've no particular reason to love; which to me, were I placed in your situation, would be a source of very great satisfaction. My mother always said, Master Pathfinder, that dying peo-

ple's spirits should not be damped, but that they ought to be encouraged by all proper and prudent means; and this news will give the poor fellow a great lift, if he feels towards them savages any way as I feel myself."

June arose at this intelligence, and stole from the blockhouse with a noiseless step. Dunham listened with a vacant stare, for life had already lost so many of its ties that he had really forgotten Arrowhead, and cared nothing for Muir; but he inquired, in a feeble voice, for Eau-douce. The young man was immediately summoned, and soon made his appearance. The Sergeant gazed at him kindly, and the expression of his eyes was that of regret for the injury he had done him in thought. The party in the blockhouse now consisted of Pathfinder, Cap, Mabel, Jasper, and the dying man. With the exception of the daughter, all stood around the Sergeant's pallet, in attendance on his last moments. Mabel kneeled at his side, now pressing a clammy hand to her head, now applying moisture to the parched lips of her father.

“Your case will shortly be ourn, Sergeant,” said Pathfinder, who could hardly be said to be awe-struck by the scene, for he had witnessed the approach and victories of death too often for that; but who felt the full difference between his triumphs in the excitement of battle, and in the quiet of the domestic circle; “and I make no question we shall meet ag’in, hereafter. Arrowhead has gone his way, ’tis true; but it can never be the way of a just Indian. You’ve seen the last of him, for his path cannot be the path of the just. Reason is ag’in the thought, in his case, as it is also in my judgment, ag’in it, too, in the case of Lieutenant Muir. You have done your duty in life, and when a man does that, he may start on the longest journey with a light heart, and an actyve foot.”

“I hope so, my friend; I’ve tried to do my duty.”

“Ay, ay,” put in Cap; “intention is half the battle; and though you would have done better had you hove-to in the offing, and

sent a craft in to feel how the land lay, things might have turned out differently; no one here doubts that you meant all for the best, and no one anywhere else, I should think, from what I've seen of this world, and read of t' other."

"I did; yes. I meant all for the best."

"Father! Oh! my beloved father!"

"Magnet is taken aback by this blow, Master Pathfinder, and can say or do but little to carry her father over the shoals; so we must try all the harder to serve him a friendly turn ourselves."

"Did you speak, Mabel?" Dunham asked, turning his eyes in the direction of his daughter, for he was already too feeble to turn his body.

"Yes, father; rely on nothing you have done yourself, for mercy and salvation; trust altogether in the blessed mediation of the Son of God!"

"The chaplain has told us something like this, brother. The dear child may be right."

"Ay, ay, that's doctrine, out of question. He will be our Judge, and keeps the log-book

of our acts, and will foot them all up at the last day, and then say who has done well, and who has done ill. I do believe Mabel is right; but then you need not be concerned, as no doubt the account has been fairly kept."

"Uncle! — dearest Father! This is a vain illusion! Oh, place all your trust in the mediation of our Holy Redeemer! Have you not often felt your own insufficiency to effect your own wishes in the commonest things, and how can you imagine yourself, by your own acts, equal to raise up a frail and sinful nature sufficiently to be received into the presence of perfect purity? There is no hope for any but in the mediation of Christ!"

"This is what the Moravians used to tell us," said Pathfinder to Cap, in a low voice; "rely on it, Mabel is right."

"Right enough, friend Pathfinder, in the distances, but wrong in the course. I'm afraid the child will get the Sergeant adrift, at the very moment when we had him in the best of the water, and in the plainest part of the channel."

“Leave it to Mabel; leave it to Mabel; she knows better than any of us, and can do no harm.”

“I have heard this before,” Dunham at length replied. “Ah! Mabel; it is strange for the parent to lean on the child at a moment like this!”

“Put your trust in God, father; lean on His holy and compassionate Son. Pray, dearest, dearest father; pray for his omnipotent support.”

“I am not used to prayer, brother. Pathfinder — Jasper, can you help me to words?”

Cap scarcely knew what prayer meant, and he had no answer to give. Pathfinder prayed often, daily, if not hourly, but it was mentally, in his own simple modes of thinking, and without the aid of words at all. In this strait, therefore, he was as useless as the mariner, and had no reply to make. As for Jasper Eaudouce, though he would gladly have endeavoured to move a mountain to relieve Mabel, this was asking assistance it exceeded his power to give, and he shrunk back with the shame,

that is only too apt to overcome the young and vigorous when called on to perform an act that tacitly confesses their real weakness, and dependence on a superior power.

“Father!” said Mabel, wiping her eyes, and endeavouring to compose features that were pallid, and actually quivering with emotion, “*I will pray with you, for you, for myself, for us all.* The petition of the feeblest and humblest is never unheeded.”

There was something sublime, as well as much that was supremely touching, in this act of filial piety. The quiet, but earnest manner in which this young creature prepared herself to perform the duty; the self-abandonment with which she forgot her sex’s timidity and sex’s shame, in order to sustain her parent at that trying moment; the loftiness of purpose with which she directed all her powers to the immense object before her, with a woman’s devotion, and a woman’s superiority to trifles, when her affections make the appeal; and the holy calm into which her grief was compressed, rendered her, for the moment, an object of

something very like awe and veneration to her companions.

Mabel had been religiously and reasonably educated; equally without exaggeration and without self-sufficiency. Her reliance on God was cheerful and full of hope, while it was of the humblest and most dependent nature. She had been accustomed from childhood to address herself to the Deity in prayer; taking example from the Divine mandate of Christ himself, who commanded his followers to abstain from vain repetitions, and who has left behind him a petition that is unequalled for sublimity and sententiousness, as if expressly to rebuke the disposition of man to set up his own loose and random thoughts as the most acceptable sacrifice. The sect in which she had been reared has furnished to its followers some of the most beautiful compositions of the language, as a suitable vehicle for its devotion and solicitations. Accustomed to this mode of public and even private prayer, the mind of our heroine had naturally fallen into its train of lofty thought; her task had become improved

by its study, and her language elevated and enriched by its phrases. In short, Mabel, in this respect, was an instance of the influence of familiarity with propriety of thought, fitness of language, and decorum of manner, on the habits and expressions of even those who might be supposed not to be always so susceptible of receiving high impressions of this nature. When she kneeled at the bed-side of her father, the very reverence of her attitude and manner prepared the spectators for what was to come ; and as her affectionate heart prompted her tongue, and memory came in aid of both, the petition and praises that she offered up were of a character that might have worthily led the spirits of angels. Although the words were not slavishly borrowed, the expressions partook of the simple dignity of the liturgy to which she had been accustomed, and was probably as worthy of the Being to whom they were addressed as they could well be made by human powers. They produced their full impression on the hearers ; for it is worthy of remark, that, notwithstanding the pernicious effects of

a false taste when long submitted to, real sublimity and beauty are so closely allied to nature that they generally find an echo in every heart.

But when our heroine came to touch upon the situation of the dying man, she became the most truly persuasive, for then she was the most truly zealous and natural. The beauty of the language was preserved, but it was sustained by the simple power of love; and her words were warmed by a holy zeal, that approached to the grandeur of true eloquence. We might record some of her expressions, but doubt the propriety of subjecting such sacred themes to a too familiar analysis, and refrain.

The effect of this singular but solemn scene was different on the different individuals present. Dunham himself was soon lost in the subject of the prayer; and he felt some such relief, as one who finds himself staggering on the edge of a precipice under a burthen difficult to be borne, might be supposed to experience, when he unexpectedly feels the weight removed, in order to be placed on the shoul-

ders of another better able to sustain it. Cap was surprised, as well as awed ; though the effects on his mind were not very deep or very lasting. He wondered a little at his own sensations, and had his doubts whether they were as manly and heroic as they ought to be ; but he was far too sensible of the influence of truth, humility, religious submission and human dependency, to think of interposing with any of his crude objections. Jasper knelt opposite to Mabel, covered his face, and followed her words, with an earnest wish to aid her prayers with his own ; though it may be questioned if his thoughts did not dwell quite as much on the soft gentle accents of the petitioner, as on the subject of her petition.

The effect on Pathfinder was striking and visible ; visible, because he stood erect, also opposite to Mabel ; and the workings of his countenance, as usual, betrayed the workings of the spirit within. He leaned on his rifle, and, at moments, the sinewy fingers grasped the barrel with a force that seemed to compress the weapon ; while, once or twice, as Mabel's

language rose in intimate association with her thoughts, he lifted his eyes to the floor above him, as if he expected to find some visible evidence of the presence of the dread Being to whom the words were addressed. Then again his feelings reverted to the fair creature who was thus pouring out her spirit, in fervent but calm petitions, in behalf of a dying parent ; for Mabel's cheek was no longer pallid, but was flushed with a holy enthusiasm, while her blue eyes were upturned in the light, in a way to resemble a picture by Guido. At these moments all the honest and manly attachment of Pathfinder glowed in his ingenuous features, and his gaze at our heroine was such as the fondest parent might fasten on the child of his love.

Sergeant Dunham laid his hand feebly on the head of Mabel, as she ceased praying, and buried her face in his blanket.

“ Bless you, my beloved child, bless you ! ” he rather whispered than uttered aloud ; “ this is truly consolation ; would that I too could pray ! ”

“ Father, you know the Lord's prayer ; you

taught it to me yourself, while I was yet an infant."

The Sergeant's face gleamed with a smile; for he *did* remember to have discharged that portion, at least, of the paternal duty; and the consciousness of it gave him inconceivable gratification at that solemn moment. He was then silent for several minutes, and all present believed that he was communing with God.

"Mabel, my child!" he at length uttered, in a voice that seemed to be reviving, "Mabel, I'm quitting you." The spirit, at its great and final passage, appears ever to consider the body as nothing; "I'm quitting you, my child; where is your hand?"

"Here, dearest father—here are both—oh! take both!"

"Pathfinder," added the Sergeant, feeling on the opposite side of the bed, where Jasper still knelt, and getting one of the hands of the young man, by mistake, "take it—I leave you as her father—as you and she may please—bless you—bless you both!"

At that awful instant, no one would rudely

apprise the Sergeant of his mistake; and he died a minute or two later, holding Jasper's and Mabel's hands covered by both his own. Our heroine was ignorant of the fact, until an exclamation of Cap's announced the death of her father; when, raising her face, she saw the eyes of Jasper riveted on her own, and felt the warm pressure of his hand. But a single feeling was predominant at that instant; and Mabel withdrew to weep, scarcely conscious of what had occurred. The Pathfinder took the arm of Eau-douce, and he left the block.

The two friends walked in silence past the fire, along the glade, and nearly reached the opposite shore of the island, in profound silence. Here they stopped, and Pathfinder spoke.

"'Tis all over, Jasper," he said; "'tis all over. Ah's me! Poor Sergeant Dunham has finished his march, and that, too, by the hand of a venomous Mingo. Well, we never know what is to happen, and his luck may be your'n or mine, to-morrow or next day!"

"And Mabel? What is to become of Mabel, Pathfinder?"

“ You heard the Sergeant’s dying words ; he has left his child in my care, Jasper ; and it is a most solemn trust, it is ; yes, it is a most solemn trust.”

“ It’s a trust, Pathfinder, of which any man would be glad to relieve you,” returned the youth, with a bitter smile.

“ I’ve often thought it has fallen into wrong hands. I’m not consaited, Jasper ; I’m not consaited, I do think I’m not ; but if Mabel Dunham is willing to overlook all my imperfections and ignorances like, I should be wrong to gainsay it, on account of any sartainty I may have myself about my own want of merit.”

“ No one will blame you, Pathfinder, for marrying Mabel Dunham, any more than they will blame you for wearing a precious jewel in your bosom, that a friend had freely given you.”

“ Do you think they’ll blame Mabel, lad ? — I’ve had my misgivings about that, too ; for all persons may not be as disposed to look at me with the same eyes as you and the

Sergeant's daughter." Jasper Eau-douce started, as a man flinches at sudden bodily pain ; but he otherwise maintained his self-command. " And mankind is envious and ill-natured, more particularly in and about the garrisons. I sometimes wish, Jasper, that Mabel could have taken a fancy to you, I do ; and that you had taken a fancy to her ; for it often seems to me, that one like you, after all, might make her happier than I ever can."

" We will not talk about this, Pathfinder," interrupted Jasper, hoarsely and impatiently — " you will be Mabel's husband, and it is not right to speak of any one else in that character. As for me, I shall take Master Cap's advice, and try and make a man of myself, by seeing what is to be done on the salt-water."

" You, Jasper Western ! — you quit the lakes, the forests, and the lines ; and this, too, for the towns and wasty ways of the settlements, and a little difference in the taste of the water ! Haven't we the salt-licks, if salt is necessary to you ? and oughtn't man to be satisfied with what contents the other creatur's of God ? I

counted on you, Jasper — I counted on you, I did — and thought, now that Mabel and I intend to dwell in a cabin of our own, that some day you might be tempted to choose a companion, too, and come and settle in our neighbourhood. There is a beautiful spot, about fifty miles west of the garrison, that I had chosen in my mind, for my own place of abode ; and there is an excellent harbour about ten leagues this side of it, where you could run in and out, with the cutter, at any leisure minute ; and I'd even fancied you, and your wife, in possession of the one place, and Mabel and I in possession of t'other. We should be just a healthy hunt apart ; and if the Lord ever intends any of his creatur's to be happy on 'arth, none could be happier than we four."

" You forget, my friend," answered Jasper, taking the guide's hand, and forcing a friendly smile, " that I have no fourth person to love and cherish ; and I much doubt if I ever shall love any other, as I love you and Mabel."

" Thank 'e, boy ; I thank you with all my heart ; but what you call love for Mabel, is

only friendship like, and a very different thing from what I feel. Now, instead of sleeping as sound as natur' at midnight, as I used to could, I dream nightly of Mabel Dunham. The young does sport before me ; and when I raise killdeer, in order to take a little venison, the animals look back, and it seems as if they all had Mabel's sweet countenance, laughing in my face, and looking as if they said, ' Shoot me if you dare !' Then I hear her soft voice calling out among the birds as they sing ; and no later than the last nap I took, I bethought me, in fancy, of going over the Niagara, holding Mabel in my arms, rather than part from her. The bitterest moments I've ever known were them in which the devil, or some Mingo conjurer, perhaps, has just put into my head to fancy in dreams that Mabel is lost to me, by some unaccountable calamity — either by changefulness, or by violence."

" O Pathfinder ! if you think this so bitter in a dream, what must it be to one who feels its reality, and knows it all to be true, true, true ? So true, as to leave no hope ; to leave nothing but despair !"

These words burst from Jasper, as a fluid pours from the vessel that has been suddenly broken. They were uttered involuntarily, almost unconsciously, but with a truth and feeling, that carried with them the instant conviction of their deep sincerity. Pathfinder started, gazed at his friend for quite a minute, like one bewildered; and then it was, that, in despite of all his simplicity, the truth gleamed upon him. All know how corroborating proofs crowd upon the mind, as soon as it catches a direct clue to any hitherto unsuspected fact; how rapidly the thoughts flow, and premises tend to their just conclusions, under such circumstances. Our hero was so confiding by nature, so just, and so much disposed to imagine that all his friends wished him the same happiness as he wished them, that, until this unfortunate moment, a suspicion of Jasper's attachment for Mabel had never been awakened in his bosom. He was, however, now too experienced in the emotions that characterise the passion; and the burst of feeling in his companion was too violent, and too natural, to

leave any further doubt on the subject. The feeling that first followed this change of opinion was one of deep humility and exquisite pain. He bethought him of Jasper's youth, his higher claims to personal appearance, and all the general probabilities that such a suitor would be more agreeable to Mabel than he could possibly be, himself. Then the noble rectitude of mind, for which the man was so distinguished, asserted its power; it was sustained by his rebuked manner of thinking of himself, and all that habitual deference for the rights and feelings of others, which appeared to be inbred in his very nature. Taking the arm of Jasper, he led him to a log, where he compelled the young man to seat himself, by a sort of irresistible exercise of his iron muscles, and where he placed himself at his side.

The instant his feelings had found vent, Eau-douce was both alarmed at, and ashamed of, their violence. He would have given all he possessed on earth, could the last three minutes be recalled; but he was too frank by disposition, and too much accustomed to deal ingenuously by his friend, to think a moment of attempting

further concealment, or of any evasion of the explanation that he knew was about to be demanded. Even while he trembled in anticipation of what was about to follow, he never contemplated equivocation.

“Jasper,” Pathfinder commenced, in a tone so solemn as to thrill on every nerve in his listener’s body, “this *has* surprised me ! You have kinder feelings towards Mabel than I had thought ; and, unless my own mistaken vanity and consait have cruelly deceived me, I pity you, boy, from my soul, I do ! Yes, I think, I know how to pity any one who has set his heart on a creature like Mabel, unless he sees a prospect of her regarding him, as he regards her. This matter must be cleared up, Eau-douce, as the Delawares say, until there shall not be a cloud atween us.”

“What clearing up can it want, Pathfinder ? I love Mabel Dunham, and Mabel Dunham does not love me ; she prefers you for a husband ; and the wisest thing I can do is to go off at once to the salt-water, and try to forget you both.”

“Forget me, Jasper!—that would be a punishment I don’t deserve. But how do you know that Mabel prefers *me*?—how do you know it, lad? to me it seems impossible, like!”

“Is she not to marry you, and would Mabel marry a man she does not love?”

“She has been hard urged by the Sergeant, she has; and a dutiful child may have found it difficult to withstand the wishes of a dying parent. Have you ever told Mabel, that you preferred her, Jasper; that you bore her these feelings?”

“Never, Pathfinder! I would not do you that wrong.”

“I believe you, lad, I do believe you; and I think you would now go off to the salt-water, and let the scent die with you. But this must not be. Mabel shall hear all, and she shall have her own way, if my heart breaks in the trial, she shall. No words have ever passed between you, then, Jasper?”

“Nothing of account, nothing direct. Still, I will own all my foolishness, Pathfinder; for I ought to own it to a generous friend like

you, and there will be an end of it. You know how young people understand each other, or think they understand each other, without always speaking out in plain speech ; and get to know each other's thoughts, or to think they know them, by means of a hundred little ways ?”

“ Not I, Jasper, not I,” truly answered the guide ; for, sooth to say, his advances had never been met with any of that sweet and precious encouragement that silently marks the course of sympathy united to passion. “ Not I, Jasper ; I know nothing of all this. Mabel has always treated me fairly, and said what she has had to say, in speech as plain as tongue could tell it.”

“ You have had the pleasure of hearing her say that she loved you, Pathfinder ?”

“ Why no, Jasper, not just that, in words. She has told me that we never could, never ought to be married ; that *she* was not good enough for *me* ; though she *did* say that she honoured me, and respected me. But then the Sergeant said it was always so with the

youthful and timid ; that her mother did so, and said so, afore her ; and that I ought to be satisfied if she would consent, on any terms, to marry me : and, therefore, I have concluded that all was right, I have."

In spite of all his friendship for the successful wooer, in spite of all his honest, sincere wishes for his happiness, we should be unfaithful chroniclers, did we not own that Jasper felt his heart bound with an uncontrollable feeling of delight at this admission. It was not that he saw or felt any hope connected with the circumstance ; but it was grateful to the jealous covetousness of unlimited love, thus to learn that no other ears had heard the sweet confessions that were denied its own.

"Tell me more of this manner of talking without the use of the tongue," continued Pathfinder, whose countenance was getting to be grave, and who now questioned his companion like one that seemed to anticipate evil in the reply. "I can and have conversed with Chingachgook, and with his son Uncas, too, in that

mode, afore the latter fell ; but I didn't know that young girls practysed this art ; and, least of all, Mabel Dunham."

"'Tis nothing, Pathfinder. I mean only a look, or a smile, or a glance of the eye, or the trembling of an arm, or a hand, when the young woman has had occasion to touch me ; and because I have been weak enough to tremble even at Mabel's breath, or her brushing me with her clothes, my vain thoughts have misled me. I never spoke plainly to Mabel, myself ; and now there is no use for it, since there is clearly no hope."

"Jasper," returned Pathfinder, simply, but with a dignity that precluded farther remarks at the moment, "we will talk of the Sergeant's funeral, and of our own departure from this island. After these things are disposed of it will be time enough to say more of the Sergeant's daughter. This matter must be looked into ; for the father left me the care of his child."

Jasper was glad enough to change the subject, and the friends separated, each charged

with the duty most peculiar to his own station and habits.

That afternoon all the dead were interred, the grave of Sergeant Dunham being dug in the centre of the glade, beneath the shade of a huge elm. Mabel wept bitterly at the ceremony, and she found relief in thus disburthening her sorrow. The night passed tranquilly, as did the whole of the following day, Jasper declaring that the gale was too severe to venture on the lake. This circumstance detained Captain Sanglier, also, who did not quit the island until the morning of the third day after the death of Dunham, when the weather had moderated, and the wind had become fair. Then, indeed, he departed, after taking leave of the Pathfinder, in the manner of one who believed he was in company of a distinguished character, for the last time. The two separated like those who respect one another, while each felt that the other was an enigma to himself.

CHAPTER X.

Playful she turn'd, that he might see
The passing smile her cheek put on ;
But when she mark'd how mournfully
His eyes met hers, that smile was gone.

Lalla Rookh.

THE occurrences of the last few days had been too exciting, and had made too many demands on the fortitude of our heroine, to leave her in the helplessness of grief. She mourned for her father, and she occasionally shuddered, as she recalled the sudden death of Jeannie, and all the horrible scenes she had witnessed, but, on the whole, she had aroused herself, and was no longer in the deep depression that usually accompanies grief. Perhaps the overwhelming, almost stupifying sorrow that crushed poor June, and left her for nearly twenty-

fours hours in a state of stupor, assisted Mabel in conquering her own feelings, for she had felt called on to administer consolation to the young Indian woman. This she had done, in the quiet, soothing, insinuating way, in which her sex usually exerts its influence, on such occasions.

The morning of the third day was set for that on which the Scud was to sail. Jasper had made all his preparations; the different effects were embarked, and Mabel had taken leave of June, a painful and affectionate parting. In a word, all was ready, and every soul had left the island but the Indian woman, Pathfinder, Jasper, and our heroine. The former had gone into a thicket to weep, and the three last were approaching the spot where three canoes lay, one of which was the property of June, and the other two were in waiting to carry the others off to the Scud. Pathfinder led the way, but, when he drew near the shore, instead of taking the direction to the boats, he motioned to his companions to follow, and proceeded to a fallen tree, that lay

on the margin of the glade, and out of view of those in the cutter. Seating himself on the trunk, he signed to Mabel to take her place on one side of him, and to Jasper to occupy the other.

“Sit down here, Mabel; sit down there, Eau-douce,” he commenced, as soon as he had taken his own seat, “I’ve something that lies heavy on my mind, and now is the time to take it off, if it’s ever to be done. Sit down, Mabel, and let me lighten my heart, if not my conscience, while I’ve the strength to do it.”

The pause that succeeded lasted two or three minutes, and both the young people wondered what was to come next. The idea that Pathfinder could have any weight on his conscience, seeming equally improbable to each.

“Mabel,” our hero at length resumed, “we must talk plainly to each other, afore we join your uncle in the cutter, where the Salt-water has slept every night since the last rally, for he says it’s the only place in which a man can be sure of keeping the hair on his head, he does—Ah’s me! what have I to do with these follies

and sayings, now? I try to be pleasant, and to feel light-hearted, but the power of man can't make water run up stream. Mabel, you know that the Sergeant, afore he left us, had settled it, atween us two, that we were to become man and wife, and that we were to live together, and to love one another as long as the Lord was pleased to keep us both on 'arth; yes, and afterwards, too?"

Mabel's cheeks had regained a little of their ancient bloom, in the fresh air of the morning; but, at this unlooked-for address they blanched again, nearly to the pallid hue which grief had imprinted there. Still, she looked kindly, though seriously at Pathfinder, and even endeavoured to force a smile.

"Very true, my excellent friend," she answered; "this was my poor father's wish, and I feel certain that a whole life devoted to your welfare and comforts could scarcely repay you for all you have done for us."

"I fear me, Mabel, that man and wife needs be bound together by a stronger tie than such feelings, I do. You have done nothing for

me, or nothing of any account, and yet my very heart yearns towards you, it does; and therefore it seems likely that these feelings come from something besides saving scalps and guiding through woods."

Mabel's cheek had begun to glow again; and, though she struggled hard to smile, her voice trembled a little, as she answered.

"Had we not better postpone this conversation, Pathfinder?" she said; "we are not alone; and nothing is so unpleasant to a listener, they say, as family matters in which he feels no interest."

"It's because we are not alone, Mabel, or rather because Jasper is with us, that I wish to talk of this matter. The Sergeant believed I might make a suitable companion for you, and, though I had misgivings about it—yes, I had many misgivings—he finally persuaded me into the idee, and things came round atween us, as you know. But, when you promised your father to marry me, Mabel, and gave me your hand, so modestly, but so prettily, there was one circumstance, as your uncle

called it, that you didn't know ; and I've thought it right to tell you what it is, before matters are finally settled. I've often taken a poor deer for my dinner, when good venison was not to be found ; but it's as nat'ral not to take up with the worst, when the best may be had."

"You speak in a way, Pathfinder, that is difficult to be understood. If this conversation is really necessary, I trust you will be more plain."

"Well, then, Mabel, I've been thinking it was quite likely when you gave in to the Sergeant's wishes, that you did not know the natur' of Jasper Western's feelings towards you ?"

"Pathfinder !" and Mabel's cheek now paled to the livid hue of death ; then it flushed to the tint of crimson ; and her whole frame shuddered. Pathfinder, however, was too intent on his own object, to notice this agitation ; and Eau-douce had hidden his face in his hands, in time to shut out its view.

"I've been talking with the lad ; and, on

comparing his dreams with my dreams, his feelings with my feelings, and his wishes with my wishes, I fear we think too much alike, consarning you, for both of us to be very happy."

"Pathfinder, you forget; you should remember that we are betrothed!" said Mabel, hastily, and in a voice so low that it required acute attention in the listeners to catch the syllables. Indeed, the last word was not quite intelligible to the guide, and he confessed his ignorance by the usual—

"Anan?"

"You forget that we are to be married; and such allusions are improper, as well as painful."

"Everything is proper that is right, Mabel; and everything is right that leads to justice and fair dealing: though it is *painful* enough, as you say, as I find on trial, I do. Now, Mabel, had you known that Eau-douce thinks of you in this way, maybe you never would have consented to be married to one as old and as uncomely as I am."

“Why this cruel trial, Pathfinder? To what can all this lead? Jasper Western thinks no such thing: he says nothing, he feels nothing.”

“Mabel!” burst from out of the young man’s lips, in a way to betray the uncontrollable nature of his emotions, though he uttered not another syllable.

Mabel buried her face in both her hands; and the two sat like a pair of guilty beings, suddenly detected in the commission of some crime that involved the happiness of a common patron. At that instant, perhaps, Jasper himself was inclined to deny his passion, through an extreme unwillingness to grieve his friend; while Mabel, on whom this positive announcement of a fact that she had rather unconsciously hoped than believed, came so unexpectedly, felt her mind momentarily bewildered; and she scarce knew whether to weep or to rejoice. Still she was the first to speak; since Eau-douce could utter nought that would be disingenuous, or that would pain his friend.”

“Pathfinder,” she said, “you talk wildly. Why mention this at all?”

“Well, Mabel, if I talk wildly, I *am* half wild, you know, by natur’, I fear, as well as by habit.” As he said this, he endeavoured to laugh in his usual noiseless way, but the effect produced a strange and discordant sound; and it appeared nearly to choke him. “Yes, I *must* be wild; I’ll not attempt to deny it.”

“Dearest Pathfinder! my best, almost my only friend! you *cannot, do not* think I intended to say that!” interrupted Mabel, almost breathless in her haste to relieve his mortification. “If courage, truth, nobleness of soul and conduct, unyielding principles, and a hundred other excellent qualities can render any man respectable, esteemed, or beloved, your claims are inferior to those of no other human being.”

“What tender and bewitching voices they have, Jasper!” resumed the guide, now laughing freely and naturally. “Yes, natur’ seems to have made them on purpose to sing in our ears, when the music of the woods is silent.

But we must come to a right understanding, we must. I ask you again, Mabel, if you had known that Jasper Western loves you as well as I do, or better perhaps, though that is scarcely possible; that in his dreams he sees your face in the water of the lake; that he talks to you, and of you, in his sleep; fancies all that is beautiful like Mabel Dunham, and all that is good and virtuous; believes he never knowed happiness until he knowed you; could kiss the ground on which you have trod, and forgets all the joys of his calling, to think of you and of the delight of gazing at your beauty, and in listening to your voice, would you then have consented to marry me?"

Mabel could not have answered this question, if she would; but, though her face was buried in her hands, the tint of the rushing blood was visible between the openings, and the suffusion seemed to impart itself to her very fingers. Still nature asserted her power, for there was a single instant when the astonished, almost terrified girl, stole a glance at Jasper, as if distrusting Pathfinder's history

of his feelings, read the truth of all he said in that furtive look, and instantly concealed her face again, as if she would hide it from observation for ever.

“Take time to think, Mabel,” the guide continued, “for it is a solemn thing to accept one man for a husband, while the thoughts and wishes lead to another. Jasper and I have talked this matter over, freely and like old friends, and though I always knowed that we viewed most things pretty much alike, I couldn’t have thought that we regarded any particular object with the very same eyes, as it might be, until we opened our minds to each other about you. Now Jasper owns that the very first time he beheld you, he thought you the sweetest and winningestest creatur’ he had ever met; that your voice sounded like murmuring water in his ears; that he fancied his sails were your garments, fluttering in the wind; that your laugh haunted him in his sleep; and that, ag’in and ag’in has he started up affrighted, because he has fancied some one wanted to force you out

of the Scud, where he imagined you had taken up your abode. Nay, the lad has even acknowledged that he often weeps at the thought that you are likely to spend your days with another, and not with him."

"Jasper!"

"It's solemn truth, Mabel, and it's right you should know it. Now stand up, and choose atween us. I do believe Eau-douce loves you as well as I do myself; he has tried to persuade me that he loves you better, but that I will not allow, for I do not think it possible; but I will own the boy loves you, heart and soul, and he has a good right to be heard. The Sergeant left me your protector, and not your tyrant. I told him that I would be a father to you, as well as a husband, and it seems to me, no feeling father would deny his child this small privilege. Stand up, Mabel, therefore, and speak your thoughts as freely as if I were the Sergeant himself, seeking your good, and nothing else."

Mabel dropped her hands, arose, and stood

face to face with her two suitors, though the flush that was on her cheeks was feverish, the evidence of excitement rather than of shame.

“What would you have, Pathfinder?” she asked: “have I not already promised my poor father to do all you desire?”

“Then I desire this. Here I stand, a man of the forest, and of little larning, though I fear with an ambition beyond my desarts, and I’ll do my endivours to do justice to both sides. In the first place, it is allowed that so far as feelings in your behalf are consarned, we love you just the same; Jasper thinks his feelings *must* be the strongest, but this I cannot say, in honesty, for it doesn’t seem to me that it *can* be true; else I would frankly and freely confess it, I would. So in this particular, Mabel, we are here before you, on equal tarms. As for myself, being the oldest, I’ll first say what little can be produced in my favour, as well as ag’in it. As a hunter, I do think there is no man near the lines that can outdo me. If venison, or bear’s meat,

or even birds and fish, should ever be scarce in our cabin, it would be more likely to be owing to natur' and Providence, than to any fault of mine. In short, it does seem to me, that the woman who depended on me, would never be likely to want for food. But, I'm fearful ignorant! It's true, I speak several tongues, such as they be, while I'm very far from being expart at my own. Then, my years are greater than your own, Mabel; and the circumstance that I was so long the Sergeant's comrade, can be no great merit in your eyes. I wish, too, I was more comely, I do; but we are all as natur' made us, and the last thing that a man ought to lament, except on very special occasions, is his looks. When all is remembered, age, looks, learning and habits, Mabel, conscience tells me I ought to confess that I'm altogether unfit for you, if not downright unworthy; and I would give up the hope, this minute, I would, if I didn't feel something pulling at my heart-strings which seems hard to undo."

"Pathfinder! noble, generous Pathfinder!"

cried our heroine seizing his hand, and kissing it with a species of holy reverence: "you do yourself injustice,—you forget my poor father and your promise,—you do not know *me*!"

"Now, here's Jasper," continued the guide, without allowing the girl's caresses to win him from his purpose; "with *him* the case is different. In the way of providing, as in that of loving, there's not much to choose atween us; for the lad is frugal, industrious, and careful. Then he is quite a scholar, knows the tongue of the Frenchers, reads many books, and some, I know, that you like to read yourself, can understand you at all times, which, perhaps, is more than I can say for myself."

"What of all this," interrupted Mabel, impatiently, "why speak of it now,—why speak of it at all?"

"Then the lad has a manner of letting his thoughts be known, that I fear I can never equal. If there's anything on 'arth that would make my tongue bold and persuading, Mabel, I do think it's yourself; and yet in our late conversations, Jasper has outdone me, even

on this point, in a way to make me ashamed of myself. He has told me how simple you were, and how true-hearted, and kind-hearted ; and how you looked down upon vanities, for though you might be the wife of more than one officer, as he thinks, that you cling to feeling, and would rather be true to yourself and natur', than a colonel's lady. He fairly made my blood warm, he did, when he spoke of your having beauty without seeming ever to have looked upon it, and the manner in which you moved about like a young fa'n, so nat'ral and graceful like, without knowing it ; and the truth and justice of your idees, and the warmth and generosity of your heart—"

"Jasper !" interrupted Mabel, giving way to feelings that had gathered an ungovernable force by being so long pent, and falling into the young man's willing arms, weeping like a child, and almost as helpless. "Jasper ! Jasper ! why have you kept this from me ?"

The answer of Eau-douce was not very intelligible, nor was the murmured dialogue that followed, remarkable for coherency. But the

language of affection is easily understood. The hour that succeeded, passed like a very few minutes of ordinary life, so far as a computation of time was concerned ; and when Mabel recollected herself, and bethought her of the existence of others, her uncle was pacing the cutter's deck in great impatience, and wondering why Jasper should be losing so much of a favourable wind. Her first thought was of him, who was so likely to feel the recent betrayal of her real emotions.

“ O Jasper !” she exclaimed, like one suddenly self-convicted, “ the Pathfinder !”

Eau-douce fairly trembled, not with unmanly apprehension, but with the painful conviction of the pang he had given his friend ; and he looked in all directions, in the expectation of seeing his person. But Pathfinder had withdrawn, with a tact and a delicacy that might have done credit to the sensibility and breeding of a courtier. For several minutes the two lovers sat, silently waiting his return, uncertain what propriety required of them, under circumstances so marked and so peculiar. At

length they beheld their friend advancing slowly towards them, with a thoughtful and even pensive air.

“I now understand what you meant, Jasper, by speaking without a tongue, and hearing without an ear,” he said, when close enough to the tree to be heard. “Yes, I understand it, now, I do; and a very pleasant sort of discourse it is, when one can hold it with Mabel Dunham. Ah’s me! I told the Sergeant I wasn’t fit for her; that I was too old, too ignorant, and too wild like; but he *would* have it otherwise.”

Jasper and Mabel sat, resembling Milton’s picture of our first parents, when the consciousness of sin first laid its leaden weight on their souls. Neither spoke, neither even moved; though both, at that moment, fancied they could part with their new-found happiness, in order to restore their friend to his peace of mind. Jasper was pale as death; but, in Mabel, maiden modesty had caused the blood to mantle on her cheeks, until their bloom was heightened to a richness that was

scarcely equalled in her hours of light-hearted buoyancy and joy. As the feeling which, in her sex, always accompanies the security of love returned, threw its softness and tenderness over her countenance, she was singularly beautiful. Pathfinder gazed at her, with an intentness he did not endeavour to conceal, and then he fairly laughed in his own way, and with a sort of wild exultation, as men that are untutored are wont to express their delight. This momentary indulgence, however, was expiated by the pang that followed the sudden consciousness that this glorious young creature was lost to him for ever. It required a full minute for this simple-minded being to recover from the shock of this conviction ; and then he recovered his dignity of manner, speaking with gravity, almost with solemnity.

“ I have always known, Mabel Dunham, that men have their gifts,” he said ; “ but I ’d forgotten that it did not belong to mine to please the young, and beautiful, and l’arned. I hope the mistake has been no very heavy sin ; and if it was, I ’ve been heavily punished for

it, I have. Nay, Mabel, I know what you'd say, but it's unnecessary; I *feel* it all, and that is as good as if I *heard* it all. I've had a bitter hour, Mabel; I've had a very bitter hour, lad —"

"Hour!" echoed Mabel, as the other first used the word; the tell-tale blood, which had begun to ebb towards her heart, rushing again tumultuously to her very temples; "surely not an hour, Pathfinder?"

"Hour!" exclaimed Jasper at the same instant; "no, no, my worthy friend, it is not ten minutes since you left us!"

"Well, it may be so; though to me it has seemed to be a day. I begin to think, however, that the happy count time by minutes, and the miserable count it by months. But we will talk no more of this; it is all over now, and many words about it will make you no happier, while they will only tell me what I've lost; and quite likely how much I deserved to lose her. No, no, Mabel, 'tis useless to interrupt me; I admit it all, and your gain-saying it, though it be so well meant, cannot

change my mind. Well, Jasper, she is yours ; and though it's hard to think it, I do believe you'll make her happier than I could, for your gifts are better suited to do so, though I would have strived hard to do as much, if I know myself, I would. I ought to have known better than to believe the Sergeant ; and I ought to have put faith in what Mabel told me at the head of the lake, for reason and judgment might have shown me its truth ; but, it is so pleasant to think what we wish, and mankind so easily over-persuade us, when we over-persuade ourselves. But what's the use in talking of it, as I said afore ? It's true, Mabel seemed to be consenting, though it all came from a wish to please her father, and from being skeary about the savages —"

" Pathfinder !"

" I understand you, Mabel, and have no hard feelings, I haven't. I sometimes think I should like to live in your neighbourhood, that I might look at your happiness ; but, on the whole, it's better I should quit the 55th altogether, and go back to the 60th, which is my

native regiment, as it might be. It would have been better, perhaps, had I never left it, though my services were much wanted in this quarter, and I'd been with some of the 55th years ago; Sergeant Dunham, for instance, when he was in another corps. Still, Jasper, I do not regret that I've known you —"

"And me, Pathfinder!" impetuously interrupted Mabel: "do you regret having known *me*? could I think so, I should never be at peace with myself."

"You, Mabel!" returned the guide, taking the hand of our heroine, and looking up into her countenance with guileless simplicity, but earnest affection, "how could I be sorry that a ray of the sun came across the gloom of a cheerless day? that light has broken in upon darkness, though it remained so short a time? I do not flatter myself with being able to march quite as light-hearted as I once used to could, or to sleep as sound, for some time to come; but I shall always remember how near I was to being undeservedly happy, I shall. So far from blaming you, Mabel, I

only blame myself for being so vain as to think it possible I could please such a creatur' ; for, sartainly, you told me how it was, when we talked it over, on the mountain, and I ought to have believed you, then ; for I do suppose it's nat'ral that young women should know their own minds better than their fathers. Ah's me ! It's settled now, and nothing remains but for me to take leave of you, that you may depart ; I feel that Master Cap must be impatient, and there is danger of his coming on shore to look for us all."

" To take leave !" exclaimed Mabel.

" Leave !" echoed Jasper ; " you do not mean to quit us, my friend ?"

" 'Tis best, Mabel, 'tis altogether best, Eau-douce ; and it's wisest. I could live and die in your company, if I only followed feeling ; but, if I follow reason, I shall quit you here. You will go back to Oswego, and become man and wife as soon as you arrive ; for all that is determined with Master Cap, who hankers after the sea again, and who knows what is to happen : while I shall return to the wilder-

ness and my Maker. Come, Mabel," continued Pathfinder, rising, and drawing nearer to our heroine, with grave decorum, "kiss me, Jasper will not grudge me one kiss: then we'll part."

"O Pathfinder!" exclaimed Mabel, falling into the arms of the guide, and kissing his cheeks again and again, with a freedom and warmth she had been far from manifesting while held to the bosom of Jasper; "God bless you, dearest Pathfinder! You will come to us hereafter. We shall see you again. When old, you will come to our dwelling, and let me be a daughter to you?"

"Yes, that's it," returned the guide, almost gasping for breath; "I'll try to think of it in that way. You're more befitting to be my daughter, than to be my wife; you are. Farewell, Jasper. Now we'll go to the canoe; it's time you were on board."

The manner in which Pathfinder led the way to the shore was solemn and calm. As soon as he reached the canoe, he again took Mabel by the hands, held her at the length

of his own arms, and gazed wistfully into her face, until the unbidden tears rolled out of the fountains of feeling, and trickled down his rugged cheeks in streams.

“Bless me, Pathfinder,” said Mabel, kneeling reverently at his feet. “Oh ! at least bless me, before we part !”

That untutored, but noble-minded being did as she desired ; and, aiding her to enter the canoe, seemed to tear himself away as one snaps a strong and obstinate cord. Before he retired, however, he took Jasper by the arm, and led him a little aside, when he spoke as follows : —

“You’re kind of heart, and gentle by natur’, Jasper ; but we are both rough and wild, in comparison with that dear creatur’. Be careful of her, and never show the roughness of man’s natur’ to her soft disposition. You’ll get to understand her in time ; and the Lord who governs the lake and the forest alike, who looks upon virtue with a smile, and upon vice with a frown, keep you happy, and worthy to be so !”

Pathfinder made a sign for his friend to depart, and he stood leaning on his rifle, until the canoe had reached the side of the Scud. Mabel wept as if her heart would break; nor did her eyes once turn from the open spot in the glade, where the form of the Pathfinder was to be seen, until the cutter had passed a point that completely shut out the island. When last in view, the sinewy frame of this extraordinary man was as motionless as if it were a statue set up in that solitary place, to commemorate the scenes of which it had so lately been the witness.

CHAPTER XI.

Oh ! let me only breathe the air,
The blessed air that's breath'd by thee ;
And, whether on its wings it bear
Healing or death, 'tis sweet to me !

MOORE.

PATHFINDER was accustomed to solitude ; but, when the Scud had actually disappeared, he was almost overcome with a sense of his loneliness. Never before had he been conscious of his isolated condition in the world ; for his feelings had gradually been accustoming themselves to the blandishments and wants of social life ; particularly as the last were connected with the domestic affections. Now, all had vanished, as it might be, in one moment ; and he was left equally without companions and without hope. Even Chingachgook had left him, though it was but temporarily ; still his

presence was missed at the precise instant which might be termed the most critical in our hero's life.

Pathfinder stood leaning on his rifle, in the attitude described in the last chapter, a long time after the Scud had disappeared. The rigidity of his limbs seemed permanent; and none but a man accustomed to put his muscles to the severest proof, could have maintained that posture, with its marble-like inflexibility, for so great a length of time. At length, he moved away from the spot; the motion of the body being preceded by a sigh that seemed to heave up from the very depths of his bosom.

It was a peculiarity of this extraordinary being, that his senses and his limbs, for all practical purposes, were never at fault, let the mind be preoccupied with other interests as much as it might. On the present occasion neither of these great auxiliaries failed him; but, though his thoughts were exclusively occupied with Mabel, her beauty, her preference of Jasper, her tears and her de-

parture, he moved in a direct line to the spot where June still remained, which was the grave of her husband. The conversation that followed passed in the language of the Tuscaroras, which Pathfinder spoke fluently ; but, as that tongue is understood only by the extremely learned, we shall translate it freely into the English ; preserving, as far as possible, the tone of thought of each interlocutor, as well as the peculiarities of manner.

June had suffered her hair to fall about her face, had taken a seat on a stone that had been dug from the excavation made by the grave, and was hanging over the spot that contained the body of Arrowhead, unconscious of the presence of any other. She believed, indeed, that all had left the island but herself, and the tread of the guide's moccasined foot was too noiseless rudely to undeceive her.

Pathfinder stood gazing at the woman, for several minutes, in mute attention. The contemplation of her grief, the recollection of her irreparable loss, and the view of her desolation, produced a healthful influence on his

own feelings ; his reason telling him how much deeper lay the sources of grief in a young wife, who was suddenly and violently deprived of her husband, than in himself.

“Dew of June,” he said, solemnly, but with an earnestness that denoted the strength of his sympathy, “you are not alone in your sorrow. Turn, and let your eyes look upon a friend.”

“June has no longer any friend !” the woman answered : “Arrowhead has gone to the happy hunting-grounds, and there is no one left to care for June. The Tuscaroras would chase her from their wigwams ; the Iroquois are hateful in her eyes, and she could not look at them. No ! leave June to starve over the grave of her husband.”

“This will never do — this will never do. 'Tis ag'in reason and right. You believe in the Manitou, June ?”

“He has hid his face from June, because he is angry. He has left her alone, to die.”

“Listen to one who has had a long acquaintance with red natur', though he has a white

birth and white gifts. When the Manitou of a pale-face wishes to produce good in a pale-face heart, he strikes it with grief; for it is in our sorrows, June, that we look with the truest eyes into ourselves, and with the farthest-sighted eyes too, as respects right. The Great Spirit wishes you well, and he has taken away the chief, lest you should be led astray by his wily tongue, and get to be a Mingo in your disposition, as you were already in your company."

"Arrowhead was a great chief," returned the woman, proudly.

"He had his merits, he had; and he had his demerits, too. But, June, you are not desarted, nor will you be soon. Let your grief out — let it out, according to natur', and when the proper time comes, I shall have more to say to you."

Pathfinder now went to his own canoe, and he left the island. In the course of the day June heard the crack of his rifle once or twice; and, as the sun was setting he reappeared, bringing her birds ready cooked, and of a

delicacy and flavour that might have tempted the appetite of an epicure. This species of intercourse lasted a month, June obstinately refusing to abandon the grave of her husband all that time, though she still accepted the friendly offerings of her protector. Occasionally they met and conversed, Pathfinder sounding the state of the woman's feelings; but the interviews were short, and far from frequent. June slept in one of the huts, and she laid down her head in security, for she was conscious of the protection of a friend, though Pathfinder invariably retired at night to an adjacent island, where he had built himself a hut.

At the end of the month, however, the season was getting to be too far advanced to render her situation pleasant to June. The trees had lost their leaves, and the nights were becoming cold and wintry. It was time to depart.

At this moment Chingachgook re-appeared. He had a long and confidential interview on the island with his friend. June witnessed

their movements, and she saw that her guardian was distressed. Stealing to his side, she endeavoured to soothe his sorrow with a woman's gentleness, and with a woman's instinct.

"Thank you, June, thank you!" he said; "'tis well meant, though it's useless. But it is time to quit this place. To-morrow we shall depart. You will go with us, for now you've got to feel reason."

June assented in the meek manner of an Indian woman, and she withdrew, to pass the remainder of her time near the grave of Arrow-head. Regardless of the hour and the season, the young widow did not pillow her head during the whole of that autumnal night. She sat near the spot that held the remains of her husband, and prayed, in the manner of her people, for his success on the endless path on which he had so lately gone, and for their reunion in the land of the just. Humble and degraded as she would have seemed in the eyes of the sophisticated and unreflecting, the image of God was on her soul, and it vindicated its

divine origin by aspirations and feelings that would have surprised those who, feigning more, feel less.

In the morning the three departed, Pathfinder earnest and intelligent in all he did, the Great Serpent silent and imitative, and June meek, resigned, but sorrowful. They went in two canoes, that of the woman being abandoned: Chingachgook led the way, and Pathfinder followed, the course being up stream. Two days they paddled westward, and as many nights they encamped on islands. Fortunately the weather became mild, and when they reached the lake, it was found smooth and glassy as a pond. It was the Indian summer, and the calms, and almost the blandness of June, slept in the hazy atmosphere.

On the morning of the third day they passed the mouth of the Oswego, where the fort and the sleeping ensign invited them in vain to enter. Without casting a look aside, Chingachgook paddled past the dark waters of the river, and Pathfinder still followed in silent

industry. The ramparts were crowded with spectators ; but Lundie, who knew the persons of his old friends, refused to allow them to be even hailed.

It was noon when Chingachgook entered a little bay where the Scud lay at anchor, in a sort of roadstead. A small ancient clearing was on the shore ; and near the margin of the lake was a log dwelling, recently and completely, though rudely fitted up. There was an air of frontier comfort, and of frontier abundance, around the place, though it was necessarily wild and solitary. Jasper stood on the shore ; and when Pathfinder landed, he was the first to take him by the hand. The meeting was simple, but very cordial. No questions were asked, it being apparent that Chingachgook had made the necessary explanations. Pathfinder never squeezed his friend's hand more cordially than in this interview ; and he even laughed cordially in his face as he told him how happy and well he appeared.

“ Where is she, Jasper ? where is she ? ” the guide at length whispered ; for, at first, he had

seemed to be afraid to trust himself with the question.

“ She is waiting for us in the house, my dear friend, where you see that June has already hastened before us.”

“ June may use a lighter step to meet Mabel, but she cannot carry a lighter heart. And so, lad, you found the chaplain at the garrison, and all was soon settled ? ”

“ We were married within a week after we left you, and Master Cap departed next day. You have forgotten to inquire about your friend, Salt-water.”

“ Not I, not I ; the Sarpent has told me all that : and then I love to hear so much of Mabel and her happiness, I do. Did the child smile or did she weep when the ceremony was over ? ”

“ She did both, my friend ; but —— ”

“ Yes, that ’s their natur’, tearful and cheerful. Ah ’s me ! they are very pleasant to us of the woods ; and I do believe I should think all right, whatever Mabel might do. And do

you think, Jasper, that she thought of me at all on that joyful occasion?"

"I know she did, Pathfinder; and she thinks of you, and talks of you, daily, almost hourly. None love you as we do."

"I know few love me better than yourself, Jasper: Chingachgook is perhaps, now, the only creatur' of whom I can say that. Well, there's no use in putting it off any longer; it must be done, and may as well be done at once; so, Jasper, lead the way, and I'll endeavour to look upon her sweet countenance once more."

Jasper did lead the way, and they were soon in the presence of Mabel. The latter met her late suitor with a bright blush, and her limbs trembled so, she could hardly stand: still her manner was affectionate and frank. During the hour of Pathfinder's visit, (for it lasted no longer, though he ate in the dwelling of his friends,) one who was expert in tracing the workings of the human mind might have seen a faithful index to the feelings of

Mabel in her manner to Pathfinder and her husband. With the latter she still had a little of the reserve that usually accompanies young wedlock ; but the tones of her voice were kinder even than common ; the glance of her eye was tender, and she seldom looked at him without the glow that tinged her cheeks betraying the existence of feelings that habit and time had not yet soothed into absolute tranquillity. With Pathfinder, all was earnest, sincere, even anxious ; but the tones never trembled, the eye never fell ; and if the cheek flushed, it was with the emotions that are connected with concern.

At length the moment came, when Pathfinder must go his way. Chingachgook had already abandoned the canoes, and was posted on the margin of the woods, where a path led into the forest. Here he calmly waited to be joined by his friend. As soon as the latter was aware of this fact, he rose in a solemn manner, and took his leave.

“ I’ve sometimes thought that my own fate has been a little hard,” he said ; “ but that of

this woman, Mabel, has shamed me into reason —”

“ June remains, and lives with me,” eagerly interrupted our heroine.

“ So I comprehend it. If anybody can bring her back from her grief, and make her wish to live, you can do it, Mabel ; though I’ve misgivings about even your success. The poor creatur’ is without a tribe, as well as without a husband, and it’s not easy to reconcile the feelings to both losses. Ah’s me!—what have I to do with other people’s miseries and marriages, as if I hadn’t affliction enough of my own? Don’t speak to me, Mabel,—don’t speak to me, Jasper,—let me go my way in peace, and like a man. I’ve seen your happiness, and that is a great deal, and I shall be able to bear my own sorrow, all the better for it. No,—I’ll never kiss you ag’in, Mabel ; I’ll never kiss you, ag’in.—Here’s my hand, Jasper,—squeeze it, boy, squeeze it ; no fear of its giving way, for it’s the hand of a man,—and, now Mabel, do you take it,—nay, you must not do this—” preventing Mabel from

kissing it, and bathing it in her tears,—“ you must not do this —”

“ Pathfinder,” asked Mabel, “ when shall we see you again ? ”

“ I ’ve thought of that, too ; yes, I ’ve thought of that, I have. If the time should ever come when I can look upon you altogether as a sister, Mabel, or a child,—it might be better to say a child, ’since you’re young enough to be my daughter,—depend on it, I’ll come back ; for it would lighten my very heart to witness your gladness. But if I cannot,—farewell—farewell,—the Sergeant was wrong,—yes, the Sergeant was wrong ! ”

This was the last the Pathfinder ever uttered to the ears of Jasper Western and Mabel Dunham. He turned away, as if the words choked him ; and was quickly at the side of his friend. As soon as the latter saw him approach, he shouldered his own burthen, and glided in among the trees, without waiting to be spoken to. Mabel, her husband, and June, all watched the form of the Pathfinder, in the hope of receiving a parting gesture, or a stolen glance

of the eye ; but he did not look back. Once or twice they thought they saw his head shake, as one trembles in bitterness of spirit ; and a toss of the hand was given, as if he knew that he was watched ; but a tread, whose vigour no sorrow could enfeeble, soon bore him out of view, and he was lost in the depths of the forest.

Neither Jasper nor his wife ever beheld the Pathfinder again. They remained for another year on the banks of Ontario ; and then the pressing solicitations of Cap induced them to join him in New York, where Jasper eventually became a successful and respected merchant. Thrice Mabel received valuable presents of furs at intervals of years ; and her feelings told her whence they came, though no name accompanied the gift. Later in life, still, when the mother of several youths, she had occasion to visit the interior ; and found herself on the banks of the Mohawk, accompanied by her sons, the eldest of whom was capable of being her protector. On that occasion, she observed a man, in a singular guise, watching

her in the distance, with an intentness that induced her to inquire into his pursuits and character. She was told he was the most renowned hunter of that portion of the State—it was after the Revolution,—a being of great purity of character, and of as marked peculiarities; and that he was known in that region of country by the name of the Leather-stocking. Further than this, Mrs. Western could not ascertain; though the distant glimpse, and singular deportment of this unknown hunter, gave her a sleepless night, and cast a shade of melancholy over her still lovely face, that lasted many a day.

As for June, the double loss of husband and tribe produced the effect that Pathfinder had foreseen. She died in the cottage of Mabel, on the shores of the lake; and Jasper conveyed her body to the island; where he interred it by the side of that of Arrowhead.

Lundie lived to marry his ancient love; and retired a war-worn and battered veteran; but his name has been rendered illustrious in our

own time, by the deeds of a younger brother, who succeeded to his territorial title, which, however, was shortly after merged in one earned by his valour on the ocean.

THE END.

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